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THE POLITICAL MAKING OF THE NEW MODEL ARMY 1644-1647

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To my father, who first
inspired this research

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

This thesis investigates the origins of the political and religious movement which developed within the New Model army between March 1647 and May 1649, by examining the preceding period (1644-1647) when the army was formed and began its activity. It tries to elucidate how an army, raised with strictly military aims and subjected to a particularly rigorous discipline, could develop representative structures (General Council, agitators) and constitutional programmes. As there is relatively little direct evidence concerning the army's religion and politics before 1647, I have analysed the influences to which the soldiers would have been subjected.

Two main factors have been isolated, which contributed to the process of politicisation in the New Model. One concerns the army more directly and specifically: the propaganda addressed to soldiers by Parliament (newsbooks, declarations) army commanders and especially preachers. By instilling a sense of personal commitment to a cause and justifying resistance of subjects to their King, this propaganda encouraged the soldiers to think and decide for themselves. This, in turn, tended to conflict with the unquestioning obedience required by the military code.

The other factor is more long-term and tends to involve English society at large. It is a complex of processes taking place in church and state on the eve and during the civil war. In both spheres a greater participation of common people in public affairs began to develop. The spreading of "gathered churches" and the campaign of popular petitions and demonstrations in 1640-1642 are the most significant examples.

Finally, some attention has been paid to the early manifestations of a political or religious radical consciousness, in the New Model and other parliamentary armies. The experience of the latter may also have had an influence on Fairfax' s army.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acts and Ordinances: C. Firth, R.S. Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*

BDBR: R. Zaller, R.L. Greaves, *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*

BL: British Library

C.J.: Commons' Journals

CLRO: Corporation of London Record Office

C.P.: C. Firth (ed), *The Clarke Papers*

CSPD: Calendar of the State Papers, Domestic Series

D'Ewes: BL, Harleian Ms166, "Sir Symonds D'Ewes Journal of the House of Commons"

DNB: Dictionary of National Biography

EC: An Exact Collection of all Remonstrances, Declarations...[of the] High Court of Parliament

EHR: English Historical Review

FIRTH & DAVIES: C. Firth, G. Davies, *The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army*

HALLER & DAVIES: W. Haller, G. Davies, *The Leveller Tracts*

H.J.: Historical Journal

HLRO: House of Lord Record Office

HMC: Historical Manuscript Commission

J.C.C.: Journal of the Common Council of London

L.J.: Lords' Journals

Old Parliamentary History: The Parliamentary or Constitutional History of England (London 1763)

For seventeenth century tracts, when the place of publication is London, it is not mentioned.

Introduction

Until the mid 1970_s, the political role of the New Model army had not been the object of specific studies. Firth's book *Cromwell's army* focused mainly on military aspects.[1] Other works on the English revolution analysed the New Model's intervention in politics. They generally tended to see the army as a revolutionary force, aiming to transform the original English constitution. In particular they stressed the links between the army and the contemporary group of social reformers called Levellers.

The New Model was seen as predominantly Leveller in the rank and file, while the anti-Leveller elements were identified with the army commands (the Grandees). Both Wolfe and Haller and Davies included the army's political documents in their collections of Leveller tracts, implicitly considering the New Model part of the Leveller movement. So did Brailsford, who devoted various chapters of his history of these radical reformers to Fairfax's army. Aylmer and Hill too stressed this connection, highlighting the revolutionary character of the politics of the New Model. According to Aylmer, the latter was "an extreme left wing political debating society". Haller, in another work, also insisted on the influence of the Levellers, especially John Lilburne, on the army's activism.[2]

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1 C.Firth, *Cromwell's Army* (London 1921).

2 W. Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York 1955) ch. IX; H.N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (London 1961) chs. VIII-XIV, XXVI; G.E. Aylmer (ed) *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (London 1975) pp. 10-12; Ch. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London 1972) ch. IV;. D. Wolfe (ed) *Leveller Manifestoes of The Puritan Revolution* (New York 1944);W. Haller, G. Davies, *The Leveller Tracts, 1647-16453* (New York 1944).

None of these works, however, considered the New Model in itself. The political action of the latter was always seen as one of the experiences characterising the English revolution or the history of the Levellers.

After 1975, the New Model has become the object of a renewed interest. First D. Massarella, in his 1977 PhD thesis, then J. Morrill, M. Kishlansky, A. Woolrych and I. Gentles have devoted specific studies to the New Model, focusing in particular on its political commitment. Paradoxically, however, just when the army's politics began to be given central space, its impact on English society has tended to be emphasised less. In particular its revolutionary character, with the exception of D. Massarella,[3] and in consequence its links with the Levellers, have been questioned.

J. Morrill has been the most radical in denying to the New Model an autonomous concern for political reform. He has argued that the army's protest in 1647 solely concerned material or military grievances: especially arrears of pay and legal immunity for acts done in time and for necessities of war. Even when, from June '47, the New Model did put forward a political programme with Leveller overtones, it was just a device to find allies in its struggle. It was Parliament's refusal to grant its material requests that prompted the army to follow this course. When the Houses started to tackle these matters efficiently, after the march on London, the New Model gradually abandoned the reform programme.[4] Concerning the Levellers, their projects of reform were incompatible with the interest of the army, because they entailed the abolition of the centralized executive power, uncontrolled by the people, which was needed to redress the army's grievances. It was an awareness of their

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3 "The Politics of the Army", PhD thesis (York 1977) pp. 738-740.

4 J. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London-New York 1993) pp. 309-310, 323-328.

separate interest from that of the other citizens that led the New Model to reject the Levellers' programme.[5]

The other authors have also stressed the importance for the army of material grievances and "what concerned them as soldiers". They have played down the influence on army politics of the Levellers, seeing them as infiltrating the army from outside, without finding a real support from the rank and file.[6] However, Kishlansky and Gentles have distanced themselves, in some respect, from this interpretation. The former, contrary to the theory of the separate interest, has stressed how the army came to identify its rights and interests with those of the rest of society. One of the central elements in the army's ideology was that all English citizens had inherent rights belonging to them, and the army's function in the state was to guarantee them. Another fundamental principle was that the good of the whole community should prevail over private, separate interests. Moreover, in the summer of 1647, the New Model organised

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5 Morrill, *Nature*, pp. 308-309, 320-323, 328-329. This point has been made also by I. Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland 1645-1653* (Oxford 1992) p. 201. R. Ashton, too, has highlighted how the maintenance of Fairfax's army, even after the civil war, entailed a severe curtailment of the income of the average citizen, by monthly assessment, free quarter, etc.: he has pointed out that the New Model command itself urged Parliament to increase the assessment to pay the soldiers. *Counter-revolution. The Second Civil War and its Origins* (New Haven-London 1994) ch. II.

6 M. Kishlansky, "The Case of the Army Truly Stated: the Creation of the New Model Army", *Past and Present* LXXXI (1978); "The Army and the Levellers: the Roads to Putney" Historical Journal XXII (1979); *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge 1980) esp. ch. VII; "Consensus Politics and the Structure of Debate at Putney" *Journal of British Studies* XX (1981); "Ideology and Politics in the Parliamentary Armies", in J. Morrill, *Reactions to the English Civil War* (London 1982). A. Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen. The General Council of the Army and its Debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford 1987). I. Gentles, "Arrears of Pay and Ideology in the Army Revolt of 1647", in I. Roy, B. Bond (eds.) *War and Society* (London 1977); I. Gentles, *The New Model Army*, ch. V-VI; "The Choosing of Officers for the New Model Army", *Historical Research* LXVII (1994).

regular meetings between army members and civilians, to discuss together common affairs.[7]

Gentles has acknowledged a stronger influence of the Levellers on the army than the other authors, at least in the autumn of 1647. The new Leveller-oriented agents that emerged in September did have the support of at least part of their regiment, at least in some regiments.[8] It was the awareness of Leveller support among the rank and file that persuaded the higher officers to have the Leveller's constitutional proposal, the *Agreement of the People*, read in the General Council of the Army.[9]

All these historians, however, have studied the army's politics only from March 1647 on, when the New Model came to the fore as a political subject. The origins of its political commitment, the process through which it developed a political consciousness have not been examined yet. Scholars have sometimes assumed that the politicization of the army was involuntarily stimulated by Parliament, with its unreasonable refusal to meet the army's material requests (Kishlansky and Morrill). This process of politicization therefore took place in 1647 only, in the space of a few months. Until the late spring of 1647, the army's only concerns were to fight the king's forces and then prevent a new war. It performed a purely military function[10]. Woolrych has argued, on the contrary, that a political awareness began to form in the New Model long before 1647, even though, until this date, it was largely latent. Gentles has highlighted the presence of radical positions, both in religion and politics, at least among

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7 Kishlansky, "Ideology and Politics", pp166-167, 170-173; and "Army and Levellers", pp796-802. On the latter point,see also below, pp. 60-61.

8 On the role of agitators or agents in the New Model see below, pp. 32-36.

9 Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp 199-202, 217, 225-226. On the General Council cf below, pp. 41-46.

10 Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 180-182; Morrill, *Nature*, pp. 323-324.

officers, as early as 1645.[11] Even the latter authors, however, have made only a passing reference to the early political history of the New Model, concentrating on the events of 1647 and later.

The purpose of my research, on the contrary, is to address the issue of the origins of the army's commitment, to investigate why and how the New Model members came to be politicized. I will examine the various factors, which stimulated the rise of a political consciousness among them. Some of these influences were direct (propaganda addressed to the army, experiences of petitioning and organized mutiny). Others were more general (political and religious processes taking place in English society during the civil war). In later chapters I will try to highlight how, even before the spring of 1647, part of the army members felt politically motivated and military duties, though of course primary, were not their only concern.

In examining now the nature of the political commitment in the New Model army I wish to focus on two aspects that seem to me to have been less considered: the issue of democracy and the link between the latter and religion. Democracy[12], as we will see, was a central issue in the army movement[13]. It characterized both its successive proposals for a

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11 Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 19-23; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", esp. pp. 271-279.

12 I am using the term "democracy" because I believe it describes the methods and objectives of the New Model in 1647 accurately enough, as I will try to show. However, it must be borne in mind that, while today's democracy implies the acceptance of dissenting minorities, in seventeenth century it contemplated only freedom of preliminary debate. In the end, all participants had to be of the same opinion. Moreover, the army movement never defined itself as "democratic", nor claimed to be pursuing democracy.

13 From now on I will refer to those involved in army politics also as "the movement". As a term, I think that it is more precise than just "the army", since, as such, the latter was a military, not a political body. However, when it got involved in national politics, the New Model began to act as a political entity. It created a new organization, parallel to military structures, pursuing a minimal common programme of state reform (biennial Parliaments, more equal voting system, right to petition). Moreover, although the majority of the army joined the movement, not all its members took part in it. Four

reform of the state and its internal political organization, with two main aspects: participation and accountability. On the one hand, emphasis was put on the need to grant to every member of the collectivity, in as equal a measure as possible, a direct share in its management. On the other hand, even when delegates were chosen to speak on behalf of the whole, they had strictly to conform in their actions to the will of the collectivity they represented, which was entitled to remove them.

Certainly, not all the objectives the army pursued were democratic. An example of the contrary was the request for ejection from Parliament of their Presbyterian opponents, the "eleven members", who seemed to them to have been most active in opposing their protest[14]. The march on London, too, had an ambiguous character. On the one hand, its official purpose was to set Parliament free from the pressure exerted by the Presbyterian crowd, who had forced its members to pass votes against their will (re-establishing an all- Presbyterian Militia and calling the king to London at the army's own conditions). Those members who had had to abandon the Houses to preserve their independence of judgement were enabled to re-enter by the action of the army. However, the latter did not confine itself to this action. It began in its turn to purge both Parliament

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percent of common soldiers deserted between April and June 1647, attracted by Parliament's offer to pay those who disbanded. One fourth of senior officers left in June, or were forcibly ejected by their soldiers, because they opposed the army's proceedings. Seven percent of inferior officers also withdrew. They were replaced by men who were also political activists. Cf. Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 168; Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 218-221. See also *A Vindication of a hundred sixty-seven Officers that are Come off from the Army* (June 26, 1647) BL, E 394 (3). "A Petition of divers Presbyterian Officers to Sir T. Fairfax", in *Perfect Occurrences* N° 21 (May 21-28, 1647) BL, E 390 (7), p. 137; Tanner MSS vol. 58, fo 234. Besides, two regiments, those of Skippon and Fortescue, took very little part in the deliberations of the movement, sending only one officer as representative to the General Council. Cf. C.P. I, p. 436 fn. 1, p. 437 fn. 3; Firth & Davies, I, p. 339, II, pp. 432-433. At the same time other forces, which originally were not part of the New Model army, joined the movement in the summer, especially the Northern army. Cf. below, p. 49.

14 On the case of the eleven members cf. *Old Parliamentary History*, XV, pp. 71-80, 116-158; C. Walker, *The History of the Independency* (1648) pp. 36-38; *A Declaration of the Engagements* etc. (March 21-September 21, 1647) BL, E 409 (25) pp. 79-94.

and the Militia of their Presbyterian opponents, or those who had not left Westminster after the *coup* of 26 July. Moreover the movement, too, had exerted pressure on the Houses and the City in June, threatening to advance to London if its requests were not met[15]. It continued to do so after the march on London. The threat of an army's intervention was used to force the dissenting members remaining in the Commons to pass the legislative proposals of the movement[16]. The removal of the dissenting officers by their soldiers in June also had an element of intolerance in it[17]. Yet the fact remains that a serious attempt was made at reaching a level of democracy as complete as possible.

The other fundamental aspect of the army's commitment was the connection between these democratic principles and practices and religious faith. As we will see, Scripture and the will of God were often referred to by the movement as a justification of its protest and its radical proposals. This link between radical puritanism and democracy in the New Model has already been stressed[18]. W. Haller and L. Solt have analyzed the often democratic content of religious preaching to the army, by military chaplains and sometimes by officers themselves. Woodhouse has taken the New Model as a central element in his research on the influence of puritanism on ideas of political freedom and equality. More recently, Gentles has shown how religious teaching and practice helped

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15 *Severall Letters from His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Officers of the Army to... the City of London* (June 21-26, 1647) BL, 8122 d 38; S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War* (London 1886-1891) III, pp. 166-170, 175-177.

16 J.S.A. Adamson, *The Peerage in Politics, 1645-1649,* PhD thesis (Cambridge 1986) ch IV, esp. pp. 169-173, 186-190; F. Maseres (ed.) *Select Tracts relating to the Civil Wars in England* (London 1815) p. 402; Gardiner, *Great Civil War,* III, pp. 180-185.

17 Cf. below, pp. 51-54.

18 See L. Solt, *Saints in Arms. Puritanism and Democracy in Cromwell's army* (Stanford 1959); A.S.P. Woodhouse (ed.), *Puritanism and Liberty* (Chicago 1951) Introduction; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* ch. VI; Gentles, *New Model Army,* pp. 100-105, esp. p. 103.

to spread among army members ideas of liberty of conscience and egalitarianism. He has argued that such concepts were at the basis of the creation of the General Council, in which both officers and soldiers could sit, and of the cooperation between the two in the political activism of 1647. However, none of these authors has examined this subject specifically. They all have considered it only as a particular example in a more comprehensive study of puritanism (Solt, Haller, Woodhouse) or of all aspects of religion in the New Model (Gentles). I think, nonetheless, that, as democracy was a central character of the army politics, so radical puritanism was an essential element of its democratic positions.

Chapter I: The Army Movement of 1647

In March 1647, a protest movement against Parliament's policy was started in the New Model army. The soldiers began to organise meetings among themselves, to discuss their problems and devise solutions. They drew up drafts of petitions and circulated them to get subscriptions. Some of them directed propaganda towards their fellow soldiers, urging them to resist Parliament's orders (about demobilisation, Irish expedition, etc.). These activities involved not only single companies, troops or regiments, but also a coordination among them. All initiatives were taken without the authorisation and sometimes against the explicit orders of their superiors. The latter, however, often sympathised with their men and even joined them[19].

Initially, the protest had a strictly economic and professional character. The soldiers demanded the payment of their arrears, an indemnity, or legal immunity for acts done under necessity of war, to keep the same commanders, etc. These were the requests contained in their first petition to Parliament and reiterated in their successive documents.[20] Very soon, however, officers and soldiers began to express wider concerns, of a more political nature. In justifying their action, they also examined themselves on the motivations and goals for which they had engaged in the war: and the latter were not just military. The members of the movement felt that they had not fought merely to defeat an enemy army, or to obey Parliament's orders. They had been called to fight by Parliament, but they had answered that call because they shared the latter's objectives. And such objectives involved a project to

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19 Cf. below, pp. 54-56.

20 On the first New Model petition and on the origins of the movement cf. below, pp. 310-326.

transform society[21]. The struggle in the New Model was started by the observation that, the war once ended, Parliament was betraying in its governmental action the very principles it had at first promoted[22].

The avowed goals of the Houses at the beginning of the war had been manifold, sometimes conflicting. They included, beside the defence of the true protestant religion, that of the "just prerogatives" of the king and, at the same time, of the "privileges of Parliament" and the "liberties and rights of the subjects". These conventional phrases appear in all Parliamentary declarations at the outbreak of war as well as in the Solemne League and Covenant of 1643[23]. These objectives, on some occasions, were apparently seen as complementary also by the movement. Some of its documents explicitly mention the rights of the king or Parliament's privileges[24]. However, many other documents did not mention either the king or Parliament, from the *Apologies* of March and April 1647 to the *Solemne Engagement* and the *Remonstrance* of June 21.[25] On the contrary, in most of the regimental grievances

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21 On the movement's justification of its participation to the war, cf. especially "A Declaration or Representation" in Haller & Davies, p. 55.

22 Cf. in particular, beside the Declaration above mentioned, C.P. I, p. 23, par. 8; *An Apollogie of the Soldiers to all their Commission Officers* (March 26, 1647) BL, E 381 (18), p. 1; "A Second Apologie" in *The Apologie of the Common Souldiers* (April 28, 1647) BL, E 385 (18), pp. 5-6; Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 115 v, par. 1; "A Copie of a Letter... to all honest Seamen of England" (June 21, 1647) in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, p. 145.

23 S.R. Gardiner (ed.) *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford 1906) doc. 53 (pp. 249-250) doc. 56, doc. 57 (p. 262) doc. 58 (pp. 267, 269).

24 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 61; "Some Desires of the Souldiers of the Army", in *Papers of the Desires of the Souldiers of the Army* (June 9, 1647) BL, E 392 (5); "The Last Propositions by Sir T. Fairfax", in *The King's Majesties Desires* (June 17, 1647) BL, E 393 (4), clause V; "The Heads of the Proposals", in Gardiner, *Documents*, pp. 321-322. *An Apollogie of the Soldiers*, p. 1; "Certain Heads of Aggrievances" in *Divers Papers from the Army* (May 22, 1647) BL, E 388 (18), p. 7.

25 "A Solemne Engagement of the Armie", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, pp. 146-151; *A Remonstrance of the Representations of the Army* (June 21, 1647) BL, E 393 (17).

presented to the Parliamentary commissioners in mid-May the soldiers vehemently disavowed any intention to restore the king to his former power, or to make deals with him. Such a protest was repeated in the official summary of army grievances drawn up by the officers.[26] This does not mean that the movement was totally averse to a role of the king in the state, at least in a first stage. However, his return to power would be subjected to precise conditions.[27] Concerning Parliament, the New Model pointed out that the unlimited authority taken away from the king with the war risked now to be appropriated by that body. In this case too, therefore, a restriction of power was necessary.[28]

The primary concern of the army movement, however, was neither the privileges of Parliament nor those of the crown, both governing bodies. It was the right of the subjects, of those who were governed by both king and Parliament. The vindication of such a right continually recurs in the early tracts of the movement, starting with its *Apollogie* of March 26, almost contemporary to its first petition. The authors of the *Apollogie*, in recalling the reasons of their participation to the war, still mentioned the privileges of the Houses. However, they focused much more on the defence of the rights of ordinary people, and the consequent struggle against all forms of arbitrary power.[29]

The two Apologies of late April renewed this commitment of the movement on the side of the governed, against the abuse of powers from their rulers. The Second Apologie also introduced a note of equality, specifying that the "meanest subject" should be granted the same rights

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26 Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 112, par. 8; fo 107 v, par. 9; fo 115, par. 8; fo 116, par. 7; fo119v par. 7; fo 117v-118 , par. 8; fo 122, par. 10; fo 124, par. 8; *A Perfect and True Copy of the Several Grievances of the Army* (May 15, 1647) BL, E 390 (3), par. 10.

27 See below, p. 18.

28 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 59.

29 *An Apollogie of the Souldiers*, p. 1.

enjoyed by all others.[30] The same egalitarian note would recur in the *Solemne Engagement*, where the movement pledged itself to establish "a common and equal right and freedom", extended to all sections of society. Significantly, the only exception concerned those who did not accept the principles of freedom and tried to deny it to others. In this case, granting them freedom of action would result in having it denied to all others.[31] In its appeal to the Navy to join its protest, the New Model reiterated this concept. Again, it stressed the need to grant everybody the same portion of justice, and ensure everybody their rights, safeguarding the people against any threat to them in the future. To achieve this end, it was necessary to remove all forms of oppressive power limiting the freedom of the subjects.[32]

Even in the lists of grievances presented by the army at Saffron Walden in May, centred on professional issues,[33] some regiments put the safeguard of the people's rights as a primary request to Parliament. They emphasized that the need to protect these rights had been the reason for their engaging in the war on the side of Parliament. They also reminded the latter that it had been on these grounds that it had called the people to fight the king.[34] This point would not appear in the official printed version of the grievances[35] but, as we have seen, would be taken on again in the *Solemne Engagement.*

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30 " Second Apologie", in *The Apologie of the Common Souldiers*, pp. 4, 5, 8, par. 6; H. Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England from 1646 to 1652* (London 1842) p. 204; G. Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates: the Soldiers Politicization and the General Council of the Army, 1647", *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, VII (1987) p. 118.

31 "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, pp. 150-151.

32 "Honest Seamen of England", in ibid, p. 152.

33 Morrill, *Nature*, pp. 309-310; Kishlansky, "Army and Levellers", p. 801.

34 Clarke MSS., vol. 41, fo 115v; fo 119, par. 1; fo 106v; fo 111v.

35 *A Perfect and True Copy*, May 15.

In their first Apology of April, the eight regiments justified by this commitment on the people's behalf not only their participation in the war, but their present refusal of disbandment and the Irish service. Ireton's and Fairfax's regiments in their May grievances did the same. They gave to their resistance a political, rather than a military motivation. They argued that, since they had fought for the freedom of the people, their first duty as soldiers now was to see that freedom secured, before taking any other engagement. They closely linked their military function with the political one of preserving the freedom of the people.[36] Their statements seem to belie those officers who at Saffron Walden, in mid-April, had claimed that their men would agree to the Irish service provided that they remained under their old familiar commanders.[37]

Even when the movement accepted the prerogative of the king, it was only on conditional terms: as long as his power was compatible with respect for the rights of the subjects. This meant, in practice, eliminating some of his prerogatives (such as that of summoning and dissolving Parliament at pleasure, or controlling the national army).[38] It is true that, in this early stage, such a commitment in favour of the people often remained rather theoretical, general.[39] It was a mere statement of principle, which avoided explaining what the right of the subject consisted in. There were two cases, however, in which the soldiers were more specific, indicating concrete examples of this right: freedom to address authorities through petitions, to express one's protest and,

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36 Cary, *Memorials*, p. 204; also in Tanner MSS, vol 58, fo 80, 82; Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fos 106 v, 111; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", pp. 30-31, 32.

37 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer*, N° 205 (April 13-20, 1647) BL, E 384 (15), p. 499.

38 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 60, par. 3-4, p. 61; "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, pp. 321-322; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates, pp. 120-121.

39 March 21-June 14, when the movement presented its first political programme in the already mentioned "Declaration", in Haller & Davies.

eventually, proposals for reform; and freedom from arbitrary imprisonment and oppressive proceedings at law. Even these demands were initially linked to the experience of the soldiers as army members. Their first petition had been rejected by Parliament, and they forbidden to go on with it. An under officer, Ensign Nicholls, and some senior officers had been imprisoned or summoned before the Commons without any charge being brought against them. Sometimes, the soldiers tackled these issues from this more restricted point of view, in relation to specific cases involving army members only. They did not refer to a more general right of the people. Concerning petitions, this is the case of the May grievances of the regiments of Whalley, Butler, Harley and Lambert. The official summary of the grievances maintained this restricted perspective.[40]

On other occasions, however, the movement took its particular case as a starting point to defend the right to petition for all the people, as a fulfilment of that right of the subject for which it had fought. The soldiers were expressing this concept already in early April. At the end of the month the officers, in their vindication, joined them. They defined petitioning as the most essential aspect of the freedom the people were entitled to. They remarked that it was the only practical way for the governed to make their point of view known to their rulers. Various May regimental grievances also underlined this point. Waller's men argued that the freedom of petitioning was something that belonged to the people; it was a right inherent to their condition of Englishmen. They echoed Leveller literature in defining the latter as "freeborn". Ireton's and Fairfax's horse regiments maintained that Parliament was bound not only to take into consideration the petitions forwarded to them, but also to always grant the petitioners' requests[41]. The right of the people to

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40 Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 112, par. 5 ; fo 115, par. 4; fo 121v, par. 5; fo 123v, par. 4 ; *Perfect and True Copy*, par. 1.

41 *Letters from Saffron Walden* (April 3, 1647) BL, E 383 (24), pp. 4-5; *The Petition and Vindication of the Officers of the Army* (April 27, 1647) BL, E 385 (19), p. 2; "Heads

petition authorities was to be confirmed in the first constitutional statements of the movement, the Declaration of June 14 and the Remonstrance of June 21. There, however, it was left to Parliament to judge if the grievances expressed in the petitions were real and so to be redressed. The two main army documents, the *Heads of the Proposals* and *The Case of the army truly stated* would then return to the idea that Parliament had the duty always to redress the grievances presented[42].

The protest against arbitrary legal proceedings was focused more on the specific cases concerning army members. However, there were some exceptions. Fairfax's and Hewson's regiments, in their May grievances, also drew attention to the situation of many civilians, kept in prison without trial or even a charge against them, whose petitions for redress remained unheard. The first draft of the summary of regimental grievances contained a protest against enforcing people to take oaths against their conscience, or to answer to self - incriminating questions, contrary to the right of self-preservation, even though only in reference to soldiers. This clause was expunged from the printed version of the grievances, but included in *The Heads of the Proposals* and *The Case of the Army*, this time in relation to all the people.[43]

From mid-June on, the politicised core of the New Model began to develop a more complex political programme, involving a reform of the organisation of the state. Actually, some concern for constitutional reform appeared earlier in the movement. A first rough reform draft was

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of Aggrievances... of Colonell Riches Regiment, in *Divers Papers from the Army*, p. 7;and Clarke MSS vol 41, fo 113, par 1; fo 117, par. 2; fo 115 v, par. 1; fo 119, par. 1 ; fo 106 v; fo 111v; "Honest Seamen of England" in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, p. 145; *The Declaration of the Army* (May 1647) BL, E390 (26) p. 3.

42 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 61, par. 5; *A Remonstrance*, par. 7-8; "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 324, par. I, II; "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 80.

43 "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 325, par. 8-9; "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 82, par. 8, 9

drawn up by army members at the beginning of May, probably on the occasion of the Saffron Walden meeting with Parliament's commissioners. It was not presented at that meeting, where only professional grievances were expressed[44]. However, with some alterations, this reform draft was to form the basis of the political manifestoes of June.[45] It urged Parliament to give an account of the way in which it had employed the money levied on the people by taxes in the war period. It also demanded to have expelled from the Houses all members improperly elected, because too young to sit or because supporters of the king, who could use their power to restore absolutism. It then asked for a set period of duration for Parliament and a redistribution of seats according to the size of the respective counties. All these reform proposals would reappear in the *Declaration* of June 14 and the *Remonstrance* of the 21. The only difference in the "Demands" was the request of annual elections, while the June manifestoes left to Parliament the decision about the frequency. Even this proposal, however, would be taken on again in the more complex constitutional drafts of July and October, which demanded biennial Parliaments.[46] Finally, the "Demands" argued that the ultimate power in the state resided in the subjects, to whom their representatives and rulers were in fact subjected. This point was to be echoed in the most radical army document, *The Agreement of the People.*[47] However, this early tract also showed a concern for the internal democracy of Parliament that did not appear in

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44 Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, p. 69.

45 See below, pp. 22-23.

46 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 18, par. 1-4; also in vol 110, fo 16; "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 56 par. 1, p. 60 par. 3-5, p. 62 par. 7; *A Remonstrance*, par. 4, 12, 25; "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 316, par. II; "The Agreement of the People", ibid., p. 334, par. III.

47 Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 118, par. 7 ; "Agreement", in Gardiner, *Documents*, pp. 334-335, par. IV.

later declarations. It provided that all appointments in the Houses be made by the vote of all the members and not just by the decision of a few; and that, for a vote to be valid at least the majority of the members should be present.[48]

The *Declaration* of June 14 was the first official constitutional proposal of the movement. The main issue it dealt with was that of representation. The *Declaration* forcefully rejected the idea that the rights of the subjects were best safeguarded by entrusting power to a few righteous men, who would use it for the people's benefit. Good individual qualities, though important, were not sufficient against the temptation given to men by too great a power to abuse it. The problem was not only in the nature of the rulers, but also in the nature of the rule exerted. The only safe use of power was to have it shared by governors and governed: to make the former "taste of subjection as well as rule" by submitting them to the control of the latter. Therefore rulers, sharing the condition of the subjects in some respect, would be better able to understand their problems. Subjects, in turn, would be provided with a remedy against a bad use of power. Control on rulers was exerted essentially by limiting the amount of time during which they governed, through regular and frequent elections. In this way the people would be able not only to choose, once and for all, those they wanted to govern them; but to remove and replace these governors if their work did not satisfy them.[49] The same concern to prevent arbitrary power was the basis of the request to regulate local authorities, limiting to the minimum necessary the power granted to them. For the same reason, Parliament was required to expel all members not freely elected, that is to say by

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48 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo. 118, par. 5-6.

49 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, pp. 57-60.

fraud, corruption or pressure on electors. In all cases, the problem was the manipulation of freedom of choice.[50]

Beside freedom, the other underlying principle in the reform proposals for Parliament was equality. The Houses should represent equally, "as near as may be", all sections of English society. The *Declaration* moved a first step in this direction, asking for a more balanced distribution of Parliamentary seats among the various towns and counties. However, it still subordinated the distribution to census, on the basis of the taxes paid by a constituency.[51]

The *Remonstrance* of June 21 also concerned itself with securing the freedom of the governed and, like the Declaration, demanded the removal from Parliament of all those illegally elected. It also set precise limits to the power of governors, from Parliament members to judges and all public officials. There was a special insistence on the need to make all the latter accountable, ultimately to the people, for their proceedings.[52]

The *Heads of the Proposals*, published in early August, reiterated the basic reform demands of the two earlier declarations, however specifying them more and modifying some points. Originally, they were not the work of the rank and file. They were drafted by a group of the higher officers, together with some Independent Parliament members, the peers Saye and Wharton in particular. It was probably Ireton who put them in writing.[53]

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50 ibid., p. 56 par. 1, p. 62.

51 ibid., pp. 60-61.

52 *A Remonstrance*, par. 5, 6, 12, 19, 22, 25.

53 Gentles, *New Model Army*,pp 181- 182; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, p160; J.S.A. Adamson has argued that the *Heads* were entirely the work of the Independent peers, while the army officers just collaborated in promoting them in the General Council. Adamson, *Peerage*, pp173- 185, 217- 218. This author's argument, however, has proved higly contentious. See the articles by M. Kishlansky, "Saye What?", HJ XXXIII (1990); and "Saye No More", Journal of British Studies XXX (1991); and Adamson's reply, "Politics and the Nobility in Civil War England" HJ XXXIV (1991).

However, the soldiers also had a part in examining them, introducing some alterations and various new points.[54]

The *Heads* renewed the request for fixed duration of Parliaments, regular and free elections, more equal distribution of seats, on the basis of the taxes paid by towns and counties.[55] However it left to the Commons (but not the Peers, who were not elected) the power to alter these measures in the future, although with the proviso that any change should be to improve the freedom and equality of elections. Moreover, it entrusted foreign and military policy to a Council of State, appointed and controlled by Parliament, without whose consent it could not make important decisions; yet not directly elected and endowed with some autonomous power. Its members, unlike those of the Houses, could hold their office for seven years. Finally, after a period of time the king would have a share in their appointment.[56]

The Agreement of the People of October 1647 retained many of these proposals, but also introduced some significant innovations.[57] All powers were given to Parliament, as representative of the people. This excluded not only any role for a restricted body like the Council of State, but also any share of power for the king. The presence of the latter in the state was not even mentioned. Besides, although the *Agreement* spoke generally of "Parliament", in fact it meant the Commons only. Its members were called the "Representatives" of the Nation, "inferior only to theirs *who choose them*". All Parliament members, therefore, had to be elected. Moreover, it was stressed that even their power was subordinated to that of their electors. This, in practice, meant taking away from

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54 Adamson, *Peerage,* pp. 195-196; cf. also below, p. 44.

55 "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, pp. 316-317, par. I (1-6).

56 Ibid., pp. 317-318, par. I (7), p. 320, par. III (4-6).

57 On the extent of the army's autorship of the *Agreement*, see below, p. 26.

Parliament jurisdiction over a number of matters: religion, enlistment in the army, equality before the law, the tending of all the laws to the well being of the people. The two latter points implicitly reserved to the subjects the judgement on the nature of the laws and proceedings of Parliament. The principle of accountability of rulers to the ruled, already outlined in the *Declaration* and in the *Remonstrance* of June, was taken here to the ultimate conclusion.[58] Another important change concerned elections. The distribution of the seats was to be made according not to the amount of taxes paid by the constituency, but by the number of people living in it. In this way everybody would have an equal right to be represented, irrespective of their social status.[59]

The Case of the Army, moving in the same direction, also took away from Parliament any power to alter the rules set to regulate elections. It then explicitly confronted the issue of the franchise, dodged by both the *Heads* and the *Agreement*, stating that all males from 21 years on would have a right to vote. However, it still excluded, beside royalists who had not compounded ("delinquents"), servants and apprentices during the period of their service.[60]

The real authorship of the *Case* and the *Agreement* is not clear, nor is the real extent of their support in the army movement. Concerning the former, it was signed by ten of the new agents for five Horse regiments (Fairfax's, Cromwell's, Fleetwood's, Rich's, Whalley's). Two of these agents presented it to the general on October 18. The style in which the document is written and the continuous references to the situation in the army, even to the material grievances of the soldiers suggest that army

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58 "Agreement", in Gardiner, *Documents*, pp. 334-335, par. IV (1-5); Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", pp. 128-129; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 204-205.

59 ibid., pp. 333-334, par. II.

60 "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 78, par. 4. M. Kishlansky, "Consensus Politics p 55, fn 15.

members composed it.[61] Moreover, of the five regiments supposed to have subscribed *The Case*, only that of Whalley officially disowned it, and only after the repressive intervention of the high commands at Ware.[62] Unlike the *Case*, agitators did not sign the Agreement. However it was presented to the General Council by an army delegate (John Wildman) who testified that it had been approved by soldiers, as well as civilians. The document was later approved by the great majority of the General Council, though with some alterations.[63]

In its more mature documents, the movement tackled other issues beside constitutional reform: from freedom of conscience to legal and economic equality. Actually, these questions had already been raised in early May, but only by isolated sections of the movement. Waller's and Harley's regiments, among the grievances presented at Saffron Walden, included a protest against coercion in matters of faith. Waller's men rejected the concept of a state church as a human invention, alien to Christ's teaching. On the contrary, He had come to the world also to secure for men the freedom to worship God according to their measure of faith. Waller's soldiers complained that not only were religious dissenters forbidden to profess their faith, but they were also excluded from public offices. They claimed for dissenters political as well as civil rights.[64] Harley's regiment, joining in the grievance, argued that they had fought the episcopalian order just because it violated religious conscience. They

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61 Ibid., p. 87; Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestoes*, p. 196; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 207-208. On the authorship of *The Case of the Army* there is also a forthcoming paper by J. Morrill, who attributes it to Sexby.

62 *A Full Relation of the Proceedings at the Rendez-vous... in Corkbush Field* (November 16, 1647) BL, E 1948 (14), pp. 11-14.

63 C.P. I, p. 240; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 204, 217; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 215, 254-257.

64 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 118, par. 11-12; E. Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie dans la Revolution Anglaise 1647-1649* (Paris 1989) p. 72.

followed Waller's men in claiming that freedom of conscience was warranted by God, and that many beliefs persecuted as heresies were in fact God's truth.[65] The manuscript version of the summary of grievances by the officers also contained a protest against the imposition of the Covenant as a prerequisite to the holding of public office. However, this grievance was omitted in the printed version of the document.[66]

It is only in the manifestoes of June that freedom of conscience becomes an official issue of the movement. The *Declaration* put forward a first, moderate request. It left to Parliament to decide about the church order to be established in the state, asking only that it be not enforced on people who did not believe in it. Different forms of worship were admitted, but only as long as they did not trouble the order of the state. At the same time, however, the *Declaration* asked that religious dissenters be granted not only civil rights (freedom to worship as they wanted) but political ones as well (those belonging to them as "members of the Commonwealth").[67] The *Remonstrance* of June 21 confirmed these principles, both the freedom granted to individual conscience and its limits. It insisted about the exclusion of any "licentious liberty".[68]

The *Vindication* of July 15, however, was much more libertarian. It did not mention state institutions, and the only limit put to liberty of conscience was the need to respect the freedom of others to act differently. It was explicitly stated that an episcopal or Presbyterian church order was as legitimate as the independent one, provided that they did not impose themselves on all society.[69] In this way, the movement

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65 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 122v- 123, par. 12-13; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, p. 89, fn. 5.

66 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 109 bis, par. 15.

67 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, pp. 62-63; E. Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, p. 74.

68 *A Remonstrance*, par. 3.

69 *A Vindication of the Army*, BL, E 669 f 11 (44) p. 1.

gave public expression to a way of thinking that had already been present in the New Model in the early years.[70] Both the *Heads* and the *Case* confirmed this wide tolerance. The former totally excluded any power of the magistrate in religious matters. Not only could they not compel people to follow a kind of worship (enforcing attendance at the state church or the reading of the Book of Common Prayer, or the taking of the Covenant). They also had no power to repress unofficial religious activities (private meetings, religious exercises, etc.). There was, however, a limit to this freedom: Catholicism was still banned, and catholics could be prosecuted.[71]

The *Case* requested the same provisions, except for the measures against catholics. In this way, the latter were implicitly included in the general demand for freedom of conscience. Moreover, the *Case* called for the total abolition of compulsory payment of tithes, while the *Heads* had asked only for a reform of the system, to make it less unequal.[72] This survey shows that, from the Declaration of June 14 to the *Agreement of the People*, there was in the movement a progressive development towards a wider freedom in religious matters.

The first reference to a social issue appears in two of the lists of grievances drawn up by the regiments in May. Fairfax's and Hewson's Foot soldiers, among other things, asked that the English Law be written in English, so as to be understandable by everybody. They pointed out that if the people were not put in a condition to understand the laws, which governed them, they would not be able to conform to them. This request was not to be repeated in the successive declarations of the movement, but was to appear again, in October, in *The Case of the*

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70 Cf. below, pp. 268-270.

71 "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 321, par. XI-XIII.

72 "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 82, par. 6-7; "Heads", ibid., p. 324, par. 5.

Army.[73] Another social problem confronted by the army soon was that of imprisonment for debt. In its second political manifesto, the *Remonstrance* of June 21, there was a partial request to abolish it. It was propounded that those who had means to pay their creditors be released from prison. Both the Heads and the Case took on the request again, in a fuller way. They asked the release from prison not only of those who had means to pay their debts, but also of those who had not. It was stressed that detaining them would not pay their creditors, while it would often deprive their families of their source of livelihood.[74]

The *Heads* and the *Case* were the army documents which gave more space to socio-economic reform, from the abolition of tithes and imprisonment for debt to the request to have laws understandable by everybody. While they differed on constitutional issues (role of the king, executive power), they showed the same attention to social problems. They both confronted specifically economic issues, connected to equality and the protection of the poor. Both called for a reform of the excise that would take it away immediately for the more necessary goods and abolish it completely in a certain amount of time. They also demanded the abolition of monopolies and a more equal way of levying taxes for the various parts of the Nation. On this last matter, they renewed the request already advanced in the *Declaration* of June 14, that state officials and the government in general give account for the money levied on the people by taxes.[75]

The *Case* also demanded the re-establishment of the old institutions for the relief of the poor. More importantly in relation to

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73 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 116 bis, par. 12; ibid., fo 120, par. 12; "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 82, par. 10.

74 *A Remonstrance*, par. 9; "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 325, par. 7; "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 81, par. 5.

75 "Heads", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 324, par. 1, 3, 4; "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, pp. 79-81; "A Declaration", ibid., p. 62, par. 7.

democracy and the autonomous power of the rank and file, it was the poor themselves who would run these institutions.[76] Finally the *Case* insisted, even more than the "Heads", on the need to base taxation on a rule of equality. It asked that not only the same proportion of money be assessed for towns and counties with the same level of wealth, but also that taxes be imposed only on people with a sufficient income.[77]

Even when requesting money for the maintenance of the army, the authors of this pamphlet concerned themselves to seek it among the wealthy sections of society. They suggested that Parliament make use of the proceeds from the sale of ecclesiastical estates, from Bishops' to Deans and Chapters lands, and of state properties such as Forest lands. In addition, they indicated other possible sources of income: the money employed to pay the salary of court officials, whose offices should be abolished as needless; the money already paid to the city of London and still kept in stock there, and the income of the lands owned by the City; a reduction of both the number and the salary of tax collectors, leaving the state with more money at its disposal. The authors of the *Case* specified that ecclesiastical and Forest lands should be sold only as much as was necessary to pay the army. The rest should remain at the state's disposal for public use. They further asked for a revision of the value especially of Bishops' lands, which had been sold below their worth, and a new sale of them at the right price.[78]

It is not certain that these proposals were economically feasible. Indeed, the contrary has been argued.[79] However, the authors of the pamphlet had been very precise and detailed in indicating how money

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76 "Case of the Army", ibid., p. 82, par. 12.

77 ibid., p. 81.

78 ibid., pp. 79-81.

79 Morrill, *Nature*, p. 322; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 201.

could be raised from wealthy sources. For example they had proposed, as we have seen, a new sale of Bishops' lands at a higher rate (in accordance with its value) so to increase its profits. Or they had asked to reduce the fees due to tax officials from 1200 to 200 pounds per annum, with a saving of one thousand pounds.

Moreover, the army leaders themselves adopted the part of the programme concerning arrears, both before and after the publication of the *Case of the Army*. As early as May, the soldiers of Rich's regiment had suggested that Parliament make use of the money drawn from royalist compositions to pay their arrears.[80] It was only from June on, however, that the problem began to be considered by headquarters. In a document addressed to Parliament, the higher officers indicated Bishops' and Deans and Chapters lands, together with royalist compositions, as sources to pay the army's arrears. However, they also asked for an increase in the taxes imposed on the counties for the present payment of the soldiers, and offered to control the collection directly.[81] Both requests were renewed by the General Council of the army at the beginning of October. This time, they did not request Parliament to increase taxes, but still referred to the assessments levied on the counties for the payment of the army. They also advised using the high sheriffs in order to guarantee a more effective collection. Even in this case, however, the Council still showed some concern for the welfare of ordinary people. It offered a reduction of the army effectives and their distribution in several garrisons as a way to reduce the price of primary goods, especially in London.[82]

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80 "Heads of Aggrievances", in *Divers Papers from the Army*, p. 7.

81 Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 171, par. 2-3. The paper is not dated; however, it is between two documents dated 13 and 15 June.

82 *Proposals from his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Councell of his Army* (October 7, 1647) BL, E 411 (5), pp. 2, 4-6.

On 27 October, on the eve of the Putney debates, the request about Dean and Chapter lands was renewed by the General Council, adding also Forest lands. However, the Council was careful to specify that these lands should be used only insofar as this did not damage the poor living on them.[83] In their last negotiations with Parliament's commissioners, on December 15, the high officers again reiterated the request. They explained their insistence on that way of payment with the need to avoid charging the common people with the payment.[84] Therefore, the concern of the subscribers of the *Case* for social justice was partly shared by the rest of the movement, even among higher ranks.

This tendency to create a democracy as complete as possible characterised not only the political ideas of the army movement, but also its method of proceeding. The New Model immediately applied to the organization of its microcosm the rules of freedom and equality that it was enunciating in its political documents. Though keeping the military apparatus, ready to operate in case of war, the movement created a parallel representative structure to carry out its protest. Such a structure would enable its members to communicate among themselves and with state authorities. As we will see, this new organization worked on radically different principles from the military ones, abolishing the hierarchical order.

The first initiative was taken by common soldiers. In March and April 1647, they began to meet on their own to discuss their professional problems, in particular lack of pay, and to frame a petition to Parliament on these subjects.[85] Soon they began to appoint spokesmen, also called

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83 Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 558.

84 ibid., fo 613.

85 Cf. below, pp. 311-313.

agents or "agitators".[86] The latter were first elected, one or two, in every basic army unit, company or troop: these agitators in turn chose among themselves a number of representatives for the regiment.[87] On some occasions, the initiative to appoint delegates, both for officers and soldiers, was taken by a regiment's officer. In late April, for example, in Cromwell's regiment, it was major Huntington who selected the men who would act as representatives.[88] According to colonel Wogan, a New Model officer who in 1648 would join the royalists, and major Huntington, the first idea to elect spokesmen among the soldiery came from Ireton.[89] More often, however, the agitators were elected directly by the soldiery. In mid April, the men of Ireton's regiment were talking of sending two of them from every troop to Parliament with the March petition, although the latter had been censured by the Houses.[90] The same happened on the eve of the Saffron Walden meeting in May. According to newsletters from headquarters, the private soldiers chose two men from every troop or company to draw up the grievances of the regiment.[91] In Butler's regiment the soldiers draw up the grievances among themselves, then appointed six of them to bring their answer to the regimental officers. In Fairfax's Foot regiment, the various companies elected three

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86 The term comes from "to agitate", which in old English meant "to act on behalf and under commission of someone else". Cf. T. Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (London 1906) I, p. 260, fn. 1.

87 *The Declaration of the Army*, p. 6; "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, p. 147.

88 *Perfect Diurnall* N° 196 (April 19-26, 1647) BL, E 515 (10), p. 1.569

89 C.P. I, pp 421, 425; Maseres, *Select Tracts,* pp. 397-398.

90 HMC, Portland MSS, vol. III, pp. 155-156; C.J., V, p. 154; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 44; Gardiner, *Great Civil War*, III, pp. 51-52.

91 *Weekly Account N° 20*, May 12-19, 1647, BL, E 388 (9), Saturday; J. Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London 1722) VI, p. 480; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 32.

agitators to deliver their grievances to one of their officers, captain Awdley. In Sheffield's regiment, too, the soldiers themselves elected two men out of every troop to bring their grievances to their officers. Herbert' soldiers charged eleven of them with presenting their grievances on their behalf.[92]

In Harley's regiment, the soldiers asked to be allowed to employ their officers to represent them. In Hewson's regiment, the grievances were presented both by two soldier- agitators and two officers. Even when the spokesman was an officer, therefore, it was generally the rank and file that had elected him.[93] In turn, the officers too chose representatives. At the second convention at Saffron Walden in mid April, for example, six of them officially expressed the position of those who objected to the Irish venture. They had been given a written authorization to speak by more than one hundred colleagues.[94]

The figure of the agitator was not entirely new in the military world of the period. In the Spanish occupation army in the Flanders, for example, at the end of the sixteenth century, the soldiery had often elected a spokesman, the *electo*, to negotiate with their superiors during mutinies about pay. However, there were two main differences with the agitators of the New Model. One was that the latter did not concern themselves only with professional grievances like the Spanish *electos*, but also with requests for political reform. The other difference, equally important, was in the relation with the mass of the soldiers. The *electo* was appointed by the soldiery but, once elected, he acquired an absolute power. Even the officers, if they had joined the mutiny, had to submit wholly to his decisions.[95]

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92 Clarke MSS vol 110, fo 20v- 21.

93 ibid., fo 115v, 116v , fo 121v, par 4, fo 120; C.P. I, pp. 52, 66.

94 *Weekly Account* N° 16 (April 14-21, 1647) BL, E 384 (16) (Saturday, April 17).

95 Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, p. 60; Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 206, 332 fn. 103.

The New Model agitators, on the contrary, had no power of their own. They had to conform in everything to the decision made by the assembly that had elected them. Any initiative they took had to have been first approved by those whom they represented.[96] Especially in the early months, there are several instances of a scrupulous attention to represent the real will of the whole rank and file. First of all, the requests of the soldiers were always presented in writing to their superiors or Parliament. In this way, as captain Rainsborough explained at Saffron Walden in mid- May, the soldiery made sure that their officers (but the same was valid for the agitators) correctly communicated their grievances to superior authorities.[97] The latter were often not generally referred to as "the grievances of the army", but subscribed regiment by regiment by two spokesmen, who testified that what was written represented the opinion of the soldiers. This was the case with the *Apologie of the Common Souldiers* in April, of many regimental lists of grievances in May and of the petition of the soldiery to the Council of War for a general rendez-vous on May 29.[98] An early leaflet, circulating in the movement probably in May, recommended the soldiers to use this procedure.[99] The *Solemne Engagement* of June 5, too, was read in every regiment, and both officers and soldiers expressed their approbation by subscribing it.[100] Even the first petition of the movement, that of March 21, had been circulated regiment by regiment, asking for individual

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96 On this point, cf. in particular *The Declaration of the Army*, p. 7.

97 C.P. I, p. 38.

98 *The Apologie of the Common Souldiers*, BL, E 385 (18), also in Cary, *Memorials*, p. 205; "The Humble Petition of the Souldiers of the Army", in *Two Letters of his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax* (June 4, 1647) BL, E 391 (2); Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 115 v, 116 v, ... (Harley's reg.) ... (Fairfax's regiment of Foot).

99 C.P. I, p. 23, par. 6.

100 "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, p. 146.

subscriptions. According to an anonymous informant, 1100 soldiers had added their signatures.[101]

There are other testimonies of respect for the will of the assembly, both for soldier-agitators and officers. Concerning the latter, the six who represented the group opposed to the Irish service emphasised that they were not speaking for themselves, but faithfully reporting the opinion of the whole body of officers.[102] The three agents chosen by the eight regiments to deliver the April *Apologie* to the chief officers stressed that they would not have subscribed it if they had not known its contents and agreed with them. They had not done it just to follow their fellow-soldiers. When summoned to the Commons and questioned about the meaning of a passage in the paper, they pointed out that the latter was the result of a collective act, involving all the eight regiments and not only the three of them. Therefore they could not answer on their own about its meaning, because it was not certain that they would interpret the intention of the whole correctly. However, they were still willing to give Parliament an answer. They showed towards the questions of the MP_s the same scrupulous respect they had manifested to the opinion of their fellow soldiers. They asked the members to put their query in writing and give it to them to be brought to the regiments. In this way the former would be sure that their message would be transmitted to the soldiers correctly. Then the eight regiments would give their answer together.[103]

The meeting between army officers and Parliament's commissioners at Saffron Walden in May offers other examples of this attitude. Lieutenant colonel Reade, of Lambert's regiment, who delivered

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101 Cf. below, p. 321.

102 *Weekly Account* N° 16 (Saturday, April 17); Massarella, *Politics of the Army*, pp. 23-24.

103 Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 84; Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 17; C.P. I, pp. 430-431; Carlyle, *Cromwell* vol. I, p. 260; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 58-59; Gardiner, *Great Civil War*, III, p. 62.

the grievances of his men to headquarters, recommended his superiors not to alter the substance of what the soldiers had said. He allowed them to introduce alterations only in the style or about details.[104] The officers convened in Walden church on May 8 explained to the Parliamentary commissioners that they could not communicate what they thought was the state of mind of the soldiery. They had first to consult with their men, to be able to ascertain the real opinion of the whole.[105]

Officers, therefore were sent to their respective regiments to inquire about their grievances. The army commands, then, decided that the various regimental answers should be summarised in a declaration, containing only the elements common to all answers. At the same time, however, the single regiments were left free to present their particular grievances in addition. This shows an effort to include in some way all different points of view.[106] Besides colonel Lambert, who with other officers synthesised the various answers, maintained that the decision to produce a general answer had been agreed on by both officers and soldiers. He pointed out before Parliament's delegates that if they had decided otherwise, concerning the grievances and the request to have two more days to complete the summary, they would have departed from the will of the whole.[107] Other officers who intervened in the debate underlined that they were not expressing their own views but reporting the views of the whole, or at least the majority, of the rank and file.[108] As we have seen, the soldiers were very careful that their grievances be

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104 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 31; also in vol 110, fo 21v.

105 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 208 (May 4-11, 1647) BL, E, 386 (13) p. 523; *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 113 (May 6-13, 1647) BL, E 386 (20) p. 1059.

106 *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 114 (May 13-20, 1647) BL, E 388 (13) p. 1070.

107 C.P. I, pp. 36-37.

108 ibid, pp. 38, 46, 50, 64-65.

faithfully transmitted to superior authorities. However, the officers could be just as scrupulous. In Fairfax's Foot regiment, for example, major Cowell and some of his colleagues inquired in every company to check that the returns brought by the agitators really corresponded to the decisions of their company.[109]

At another meeting between the army and Parliament's commissioners at Thriplow Heath, on June 10, the new votes of the Houses concerning the requests of the movement were read to each regiment. Skippon, now one of the commissioners, made a speech urging the soldiers to accept Parliament's proposals. At this point an officer intervened, declaring that his regiment, before accepting them, wanted to have them examined by some representatives, of both the officers and the soldiers. However, before following this procedure, the officer asked whether the regiment really agreed with it. Having obtained permission to make this inspection, he publicly asked his soldiers whether this was really their motion. The men answered "yes" together. Then he invited those who did not agree to make their dissent known by saying "no". This time nobody answered. The same procedure was followed with all other regiments and all unanimously agreed. In this case the vote did not concern only the substance of the matter - Parliament's proposals - but also the preliminary question of how to proceed.[110] When Cornet Joyce came with his troop to take the king away from Holmby, the latter and the Parliamentary commissioners asked who was the commander. They were answered that "all commanded", and Joyce presented himself just as the spokesman chosen by the party. Then the king and the commissioners inquired who had authorised the operation: they meant

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109 ibid, p. 52.

110 B. Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs* (London 1732) p. 255; Carlyle, *Cromwell*, I, p. 264; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 178; Gardiner, *Great Civil War*, III, p. 108.

who at headquarters, the only place from which a warrant could come. Joyce however replied that it had come from the body of the army. Removing the king from Holmby was their "sence": this was sufficient to make the proceeding warrantable. To make it clear that by army he meant the rank and file, he indicated the troopers around him. The king asked again if the soldiers had been sent there by Fairfax, but Joyce insisted that it had been the whole army. In his views, the authorisation for action could no longer come only from above, but from below as well. As A. Woolrych has remarked, in this period the New Model worked like a military soviet.[111]

Actually, there are also some contrary testimonies. At the Saffron Walden meeting in May, over one hundred officers signed an authorization to proceed to the six who wrote the summary of the army's grievances. However twenty of them, led by col. Butler, dissociated themselves from this document. They complained that their position, opposed to that of the majority but present among the soldiers as well, had not been represented in the answer of Lambert and the others. The latter had given the opinion of the majority as that of the whole.[112] In the same days, the eight regiments of Horse drew up a declaration that denied that there were dissenting soldiers.[113] However this episode, like the removal of dissenting officers in June, indicates a tendency of the movement to exclude those who did not agree with its basic objectives.[114]

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111 C.P. I, p. 124; *Old Parliamentary History*, vol. XV, pp. 416-417; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 212 (June 1-8, 1647) BL, E 392 (7) p. 1107; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 109-110, 111-112.

112 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 103v- 104, and vol 110, fo 53; ibid., fo 105, also in vol 110, fo 54.

113 C.P. I, p. 78.

114 Cf. below, pp. 51-54.

According to colonel Wogan, the agitators elected at the beginning of May had ruled that their troops should acknowledge as coming from them any proposal made by their agents to the commissioners.[115] In a newsletter from headquarters in June, an army informer also reported that the soldiers tended to accept as their own view whatever their agitators would decide.[116] It seems therefore that sometimes the relation between the agitators and their assembly was reversed.

Nevertheless, there were also in the movement reactions against this tendency. First of all the position of agitator was not permanent. He could be removed at any time. Although the majority of agitators kept their appointment for all the duration of the movement, some of them were replaced. This did not necessarily mean that their soldiers disavowed their action. More often this was probably a way to alternate people in posts of responsibility. However between September and October a number of regiments (eight of Horse, two of Foot, the Dragoons and the Lifeguard) chose new agents. In this case the old representatives were removed for not following the directions of those who had elected them. After the suppression of the system of agitators in mid- November, some regiments would disavow the proceedings of these new agents, especially their political programme. However, they confirmed that they had elected them instead of the old agitators because they had seen that the latter pursued their own ends.[117]

Even the polemics against the new agents centred not only on their rejection of the authority of the high Command, but also on their not being really representative. Whalley's troop accused them of publishing their political proposals in the name of the regiment without its consent.

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115 C.P. I, p. 426.

116 "Newes from the Armie" in *A Remonstrance*, 2nd p.

117 *A Full Relation*, pp. 11-12; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 198-199; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 120, 203-205.

They had asked the soldiers' approbation only after publishing them. Another troop of the regiment, calling back one of its agents from London, reproached him for acting "contrary to their intentions".[118]

Hewson's regiment, though more conciliatory in tone, made the same veiled criticism to the other agitators. It hinted that they had acted on their own, "pursuing other objectives than those for which they had been elected". Ignoring their mandate they had betrayed the trust reposed in them. Certainly, Hewson's men also implicitly criticised the new agents for not acknowledging the superior authority of Parliament and their general. However, not taking into account the authority of the assembly was seen as an equally serious flaw. After all it was the will of the assembly (at least in Hewson's regiment) that superiors be respected.[119]

With the *Solemne Engagement* of June, the movement had constituted the General Council of the army, a wider representative body, reuniting all sections of the army. In the Council sat two delegates of the officers and two of the soldiers for each regiment, of the New Model and other forces that had joined the movement (the Nottingham regiment under colonel Thornaugh).[120] All the general officers were also included. Decisions were made by majority vote, so they expressed the will of the greater part of the army. The only exclusion concerned those members of the army who did not agree with the objectives and the nature of the movement, including its system of debate.

However, the representation was not distributed on equal terms. In fact the officers outnumbered the soldiers, since they comprised both the

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118 *A Full Relation*, p. 12; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, p. 205; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 199.

119 *The Humble Desires and Proposals of the private Agitators of Colonel Hewson's Regiment* (1647) BL, E 1948 (16), pp. 2-3.

120 On the presence of the latter, cf. C.P. I, p. 439 fn. 8.

agitators for each regiment and the general staff. Besides, on some occasions, officers who had not been elected as spokesmen intervened in the debates of the Council. Moreover, the latter was not convened at fixed times, or by request of the agitators, but officially only when summoned by Fairfax. From this point of view it was directed from above.[121] As it has been remarked, the Council was a means to give an official sanction to the movement of the rank and file, but also to keep it under control. The role of the general officers, in particular, was alien to the representative character that the General Council was supposed to have. They were not sent by an assembly, but came on their own. They could express their personal views and put forward their own proposals without limitations. Moreover some of them, who were also Parliament members, in this capacity were free to express in the Commons different positions from those manifested by the General Council. The agitators on the contrary (both officers and soldiers) were mere messengers of the regiment that had elected them. They had to represent in the Council the views of their assembly, without superimposing their personal opinion. As the Leveller John Wildman explained at Putney, they were "the mouth" of those who represented.[122] Finally, the General Council began to meet regularly only in September, and in fact it had its first session after the march on London. Until then it was in the usual Council of War, restricted to officers, that decisions were made.[123] Nevertheless, there were also counterbalances to this preponderance of the higher ranks. First of all, the restriction of participation in the Council to those who concurred with the movement concerned officers as well as soldiers.

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121 "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, p. 150; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 174, p. 489 fn. 264; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 118-120; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 38.

122 C.P. I, p. 240; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", pp. 125, 128, 129.

123 Kishlansky, "Army and Levellers", p. 813, fn. 60.

Fairfax, the general, was formally the head of the Council. However, he never intervened in any way during any of the recorded debates and was often absent from the sessions due to bad health.[124] At Putney at least, the higher number of officers was counterbalanced by a swelled number of soldier-representatives. Beside the old agitators, two of the new agents elected in the autumn intervened, plus two or three civilians (Wildman, Petty and perhaps the "Bedfordshire man"),[125] all speaking on behalf of the soldiery.[126] Although the General Council regularised its meetings only in September, since mid- June the Council of War had been open also to junior officers and soldier agitators, on some occasions. The most obvious example was that of the Reading debates.[127]

The negotiations between the New Model and Parliament at High Wycombe, in early July, were carried out by senior officers only, on the part of the army. The question whether soldier agitators should participate also, was put at the first meeting between the two parties. Both agreed not to include them in general, though admitting them to particular debates, upon request.[128] However, the rank and file of the army soon intervened in the treaty, putting forward their own conditions. On July 6, fifteen officers and two agitators for each of fourteen regiments addressed a petition to the commissioners at Wycombe. They

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124 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, p. 358; CP I, p.440.

125 According to Woodhouse and Gentles, the latter was a soldier agent for Whalley's regiment. Massarella and Kishlansky, however, think it more likely that he was a civilian, since he claimed he did not know the former engagements of the movement. Woodhouse, *Puritanism*, p. 17; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 204; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 83; Kishlansky, "Consensus Politics ", p 54.

126 C.P. I, p. 226.

127 C.P. I, p. 176-214; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", p. 121.

128 C.P. I, p. 148; LJ, IX, p. 312; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 216 (June 29-July 6, 1647) BL, E 397 (1), p. 588; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 45.

urged the latter to meet their requests, before proceeding in the treaty, and justified this demand pleading necessity for the kingdom. They protested against the recent purge *in* the London Militia and pressed to have the new officials removed, accusing them of endangering the peace of the nation. They were backed by the Levellers in the City, who also petitioned the commissioners at Wycombe, asking that the men ejected from the Militia be reinstated in their offices.[129]

The agitators intervened in the framing of the charges against the eleven members at the end of June. There, however, they were a minority. The commission entrusted by the Council of War with preparing the charges, with the assistance of lawyers, comprised seventeen officers and only four soldiers. Moreover, the Council of War decreed that seven members were sufficient for the commission to work, and five of these at least must be senior officers. The *Heads of the Proposals*, however, after being presented to the General Council, were discussed by a committee of twelve general officers and twelve agitators: an equal proportion, this time. At Reading, the agitator Allen made it clear that the reform of the state was too important a task to be left only to a restricted elite. All, within the army and without, should have a share in it.[130] According to Rushworth, the army's secretary, the high commands had been persuaded to admit the agitators in the General Council by the weight that they were more and more acquiring in the army affairs.[131]

In theory, it was Fairfax who decided when to convene the General Council. Yet, in both the Reading and Putney debates, the latter was

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129 Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 165v-167; also in vol 110, fo 137- 138, 167.

130 Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 158; C.P. I, p. 213; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 176, 182; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 161-162; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", pp. 121-122.

131 C.P. I, pp. 214-216; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 48.

called after a request from soldier-agitators: about the march on London and other initiatives in July and the presentation of the *Agreement of the People* in October. In both cases, the rank and file indicated the summoning of the Council and even the arguments to be debated.[132] Moreover, from September 2, a fixed time for the Council's sessions was appointed. The latter was to meet on every Thursday, to discuss proposals coming from the agitators as well as the officers.[133]

Finally, in the Council the word of a soldier was worth as much as that of a general officer. They all possessed the same authority. Although formally the distinction of ranks was maintained, in practice it tended to fade. The basic principle of the debate, that anybody was liable to convince or be convinced, and the belief that God spoke to everybody equally helped such a development. The agitators Allen at Reading and Sexby at Putney were very bold in addressing Cromwell and Ireton, and the latter reacted to their criticism by opposing their arguments, not accusing them of disrespect. Sir John Berkeley in his memoirs was struck by this egalitarian atmosphere in the Council, where even the chief commander was just one speaker among many. If anything, it was the agitators who had the stronger influence in the assembly. What made negotiations with the king or Parliament so difficult was just the need to take into account the opinion of all.[134]

Even after the repression of the movement at Ware and the abandonment of the constitutional programme, some of this respect for the will of the assembly persisted. In mid- December the army commands

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132 C.P. I, pp. 170-175; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", pp. 121-123; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 202.

133 *A Declaration from his Excellency Sir T. Fairfax* (September 16, 1647) BL, E 407 (38); Kishlansky, *Army and Levellers*, p. 820.

134 C.P. I, pp. 189-190, 193-194, 199-201, 227-228, 322-323, 329-330; Maseres, *Select Tracts*, pp. 364, 366; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", pp. 51-52, Kishlansky, "Consensus Politics", pp. 63-64.

informed Parliament's commissioners that they could not communicate them their decisions before obtaining the assent of the whole army. For this reason, a General Council had been called, in which the proposals of the military leaders would be discussed with the agents of the soldiery. The general officers specified that they were bound to do so by the *Solemne Engagement* that they, too, had subscribed.[135]

The debates in the Council, then, were characterized by a remarkable openness of the members towards each other. Everybody appeared willing to listen to the arguments of his opponents and prepared to acknowledge the reasons of the others. There was also the confidence that an open and unprejudiced confrontation of the different points of view, together with an inner search of God's will, would eventually produce agreement. In the end the different positions would be reconciled and all the assembly would be of the same mind.[136]

Such a pursuit of unity, of general consent, had however its risks. It might draw the movement to sacrifice to it the difference of opinions, exerting a repressive action on internal dissent. Divergent points of view were accepted during the debate, but not at the moment of final decisions. Then, the dissenting minority was bound to join the majority or be excluded from the assembly.[137] In this way unity risked to be separated from consent and become uniformity. The Putney debates in particular showed both aspects of this search for unity.

The remarkable autonomy of initiative and capacity for self-government of the rank and file is another significant aspect of the movement. As we have seen it had been they who initially had organised meetings, circulated petitions and appointed agitators. They continued to

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135 Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 602.

136 Kishlansky, "Consensus Politics" pp. 59- 60, 62- 65.

137 ibid, pp 56-58, 68.

do so even after Parliament's suppression of their March remonstrance and its prohibition of further initiatives. Beside promoting the petition further within the army, they discussed how to oppose Parliament's repressive policy and the hostile petitions against them from some counties. They also boycotted en masse the Irish expedition that was being pressed on them and resisted the orders for disbandment.[138] In addition, they circulated pamphlets which openly criticised Parliament's policy, particularly *A New Found Stratagem.*[139]

The army activists soon perceived the need to provide themselves with autonomous means of communication and propaganda, both among themselves and with other armies or the civilian population. A leaflet circulating in early May, with a list of suggestions on how to organise the protest, recommended among other things that the movement get its own press. This would enable it to have its message spread among the people. It was also suggested that the movement should employ "able penmen" to write its declarations. A letter to the agitators of the same period gave the same advice. The army activists organised themselves and soon were equipped with an itinerant press that followed the army wherever it went.[140]

With this and other means the movement began to direct propaganda at the other armed forces in England, exhorting them to subscribe its *Solemne Engagement* and join its struggle. They were not always successful. The Navy, which they had petitioned on June 21,

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138 Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 58, 127, 141, 222; *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 108 (April 1-8, 1647) BL, E 383 (22), p. 1008; N° 109 (April 8-15, 1647) BL, E 384 (3), p. 1619; N° 110 (April 15-22, 1647) BL, E 385 (1), pp. 1030-1031; *Weekly Account* N° 24 (June 2-9, 1647) BL, E 392 (2) (Thursday, June 3); Cary, *Memorials*, pp. 251-253; *Old Parliamentary History*, pp. 390-392.

139 C.J. V, p. 154; *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 111 (April 22-29, 1647) BL, E 385 (8), p. 1036.

140 C.P. I, pp. 22-23, par. 2, pp. 82, 83, 86.

rejected the appeal to join, observing that they had not the power to take an official engagement of that type, not being an independent organization. They stressed their dependence upon their superiors, the Admiralty, and proclaimed their allegiance to Parliament, to whose directions they would conform in their public addresses. The commanders of the Lancashire forces, also contacted by the New Model, followed the Navy in declaring obedience to Parliament and criticized the initiative.[141]

However, the soldiers under colonel Pritchard in Glamorganshire publicly expressed their solidarity with the movement. They declared they shared the latter's initiatives and objectives, not only in what concerned them as soldiers, but also, and especially, in relation to the rights of the people.[142]

The movement achieved the greatest success in this propaganda work with the Northern army under general Poyntz. There, emissaries of the New Model had established contacts by June, encouraging their fellow soldiers to organise on their own to protest against Parliament's recent policy. The men of the Northern army followed their advice. They began to call meetings without their officers' authorisation, to discuss Parliament's ordinances and decide on the initiatives to be taken. They, too, appointed agitators to maintain contact between the various regiments of that army, informing each other of initiatives and getting assent for them.[143] General Poyntz, commander of the Northern Association, could not understand why his men were so eager to organise and consult among themselves. He argued that Parliament itself would provide for their needs; and, in case they still had complaints, they should

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141 "Honest Seamen of England", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes.* Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 202; *A Copie of That Letter... written out of Lancashire* (July 13, 1647) BL, E398 (7), p. 6.

142 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 90-91

143 Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 272, 277-278; C.P. I, pp. 144-145

resort to their superiors who would grant them justice.[144] What he did not realise was that the soldiers were no longer content to wait for higher authorities to grant them justice: they worked to obtain it by themselves. In mid- June, the Northern agitators petitioned Fairfax to have him as their general instead of general Poyntz, and to be incorporated into the New Model. Their request was granted. In entering the New Model, they subscribed both the *Solemne Engagement* and the *Declaration* of June 14, joining the movement in its political objectives.[145]

In this protest activity, the soldiers often sought the support of their officers. At the same time, however, they made it understood that they were equally ready to proceed on their own. If an authority was recognised, it was that of the "whole army", of the mass of soldiers as well as officers. We have already seen the episode of Cornet Joyce at Holmby.[146] The agitators too, in a circular letter to their regiments, exhorted the men not to obey any order without "consulting with the rest of the army" first.[147] In their March *Apollogie*, they exhorted their superiors to join their protest and warned them at least not to interfere with it otherwise. In the *Second Apologie* of 28 April, the soldiers were even bolder. They warned the army commanders that, if they did not concur with them, they would be "marked with a brand of infamy". Apparently unconcerned by the high rank of the people they were addressing, they went as far as declaring them enemies and traitors, if they opposed the "just" action of their men. In the first April *Apologie*, the eight regiments were more respectful. However, they maintained that

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144 C.P. I, ibid.

145 "To his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax", in *A Declaration and Representation from the Forces of the Northern Association* (June 12, 1647) BL, E 398 (5).

146 Cf. above, pp. 38-39.

147 C.P. I, p. 87.

they would keep on refusing the Irish service even if the general himself agreed to it. They pleaded necessity for this, claiming that such an act was "contrary to their desire". Yet they were still prepared to persist in their refusal.[148]

In fact, the soldiers tended to ignore even Fairfax's orders, if the latter were contrary to their projects. After the meeting at Saffron Walden in May and the new votes of the Houses, the general issued an order forbidding soldiers to meet or take other initiatives on their own.[149] However, the latter continued, and Fairfax was forced to move the army headquarters to Bury st Edmund's, where the agitators had established their own centre, to try and oversee their activity.[150] Cromwell and Skippon also had ordered the officers to prevent spontaneous meetings among their men, to avoid disorders. However, the soldiers kept on meeting, and even went to headquarters on their own, to bring requests from the rank and file.[151] By the end of May the various regiments had called by themselves a general rendez-vous, contrary to the orders of Parliament that they should be disbanded separately. At that moment, the high commands were unable to stop them. Cromwell before the Commons and Fairfax before the Lords admitted that they had lost control over the soldiery. The latter appeared resolute to carry on with their action with or without the authorisation of the general. In fact, at the Council of War Fairfax had summoned on May 29, the officers had informed him of this situation. The soldiers had delivered him a petition,

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148 *An Apollogie of the Souldiers*, p. 1; "A Second Apologie", in *The Apologie of the Common Souldiers*, p. 7; Cary, *Memorials*, p. 204.

149 *A Perfect and True Copy*, 7th p.; *Perfect Occurrences* N° 21 (May 21-28, 1647) BL, E 390 (7), p. 136.

150 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 212 (June 1-8, 1647) BL, E 391 (12), p. 549; C.P. I, p. 101.

151 C.P. I, p. 93.

urging him to agree to the rendez-vous and making it understood that they would gather anyway. His decision to call the 4 June rendez-vous at Newmarket was in fact an act of compliance with the will of the rank and file. Fairfax apologised to Parliament for this initiative. He admitted that he was consenting to "some things out of order", but explained that, at present, this was the only way to prevent worse disorders. He asked Parliament to suspend disbandment and consider the requests of the army again.[152]

The rank and file did not confine themselves to ignoring the authority of their superiors when they did not agree with them: at a certain point, they even openly questioned it. In early May, Waller's troopers had already denounced one of their superiors, captain Thomas. He had called them seditious and rebellious for opposing the Irish service, and threatened to send them to Ireland by force. Not only did they vindicate their right to refuse the service, but they also demanded that their superior make amend for his behaviour. Essex's military code, that enjoined soldiers to submit passively even to a beating by their officers was here utterly reversed.[153]

However, it was only from the end of May that the challenge towards unfriendly superiors became generalized. In various regiments, disagreements between the troops and some of their officers began to occur. The former blamed the latter for not understanding their "just" protest and even trying to discourage it. The soldiers stopped obeying these officers and even reacted violently to their presence, so that the latter were forced to leave. At one point, the troops began to expel the disliked superiors on their own initiative. Actually, they always

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152 C.P. I, pp. 96-99; *Two Letters of His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax*; *Old Parliamentary History*, pp. 383-390; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 212 (June 1-8, 1647) BL, E 391 (12), p. 551.

153 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 117, par. 3. On Essex' military regulations see below, pp. 89-93.

petitioned Fairfax, asking him to cashier the officers. However, they started to remove them by themselves "de facto", only afterwards requesting the general's legitimation. A contemporary letter of intelligence reported that the soldiers of the New Model would appeal to Fairfax to have the officers seen as enemies of the movement expelled. However, if Fairfax did not give his assent, the soldiers would do it anyway on their own.[154] Lilburne's regiment was among the first to start, soon followed by Rich's men and the five regiments of the Northern Association. There were also other episodes in other army units.[155] The officers affected by the initiative were always accused of acting in opposition to their men. They either misrepresented their grievances to Parliament (as Colonel Sheffield and others had done at Saffron Walden)[156] or put pressure on them to accept the Irish expedition, or simply repressed their activism. The recurrent charge against them was that they denied the "just grievances" of their men and did not consent to their "just proceedings". Col. Poyntz, for example, was accused among other things of not acknowledging the role of agitators in his army.[157] His soldiers did not content themselves with rejecting him as commander, asking to have Fairfax instead, but arrested him and sent him to the New Model headquarters to have him tried. The general, who had gladly accepted command of the Northern army, did not grant this last request and released Poyntz. He was probably persuaded by a peremptory order sent by Parliament for his release .[158]

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154 C.P. I, p. 112.

155 ibid, pp. 106, 139, 167-169; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 212, p. 555.

156 C.P. I, pp. 56, 60, 63, 64.

157 ibid, p. 168, par. 2, 4.

158 *Weekly Account* N° 28 (July 7-14, 1647) BL, E 398 (11) (Monday, Tuesday July 13); ibid., N° 29 (July 14-21) BL, E 399 (12) (Wednesday, July 14, Thursday); Cary, *Memorials*, pp. 298, 300; Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 365; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, p. 149.

In mid-June, the movement felt the need to justify these proceedings publicly in a declaration. Ten regiments of Horse subscribed it. The soldiers tried to explain the reasons persuading them to take such an anomalous initiative, apparently in opposition to the military code. Two basic motives came out from their justification. One was that their officers, by withstanding their action for payment of arrears, for indemnity, etc., prejudiced their fundamental interests and welfare. As a consequence the reaction of the soldiers, in removing their superiors, responded to the natural right of self-preservation. As we will see, this argument had been used by Parliament to justify its resistance against the king. It was already a way to undermine the absolute character of the obedience due from subordinates, even in the army itself. [159]

The other justification given by the soldiers was even more disruptive of traditional authority. They complained that their superiors were not in tune with the principles inspiring the action of the men. The former were blamed not only for actively hindering the "just proceedings" of the latter, but also just for not joining them. They made it understood that the duty of the officers towards the soldiers was to represent before public authorities the "rights and privileges" of the latter.[160]

The role of the officer that emerges from this declaration appears very different from the traditional one. It is the former who has to conform his action to the will and the exigencies of the rank and file, not the other way round. His men are not bound to obey him unconditionally, but only as long as they agree with his way of proceeding. The Northern soldiers, too, in their request to be integrated into the New Model, asked

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159 Cf. below, pp. 134-135.

160 "Severall Reasons why we Souldiers Cast Out Our Dissenting Officers", in *A True Declaration of the Present Proceedings of the Army* (June 16, 1647) BL, E 392 (26), pp. 7-8.

Fairfax to be able not to obey orders when they were not in accordance with their "just dues".[161]

Yet the officers did not always oppose the protest of the rank and file. On the contrary, the majority of them actively supported it. They subscribed the March petition, presenting it as *The Petition of the Officers and Souldiers in the army* and defended the conduct of their men in their *Vindication* of April 27. At Saffron Walden, too, as we have seen, the officers generally backed the grievances of their regiments. Harley's officers, in particular, addressed a letter to headquarters, defending their soldiers' complaints as just and reasonable, and expressing their concurrence with them. They even hinted that, if the army's requests were not answered, open discontent from them would be at least understandable.[162] Fairfax himself, answering the complaints of general Poyntz about the "subversive" behaviour of his troops, defended the latter's conduct as correct and their requests as just and necessary.[163] In general, however, the role of the officers in the movement was not so much protective, or directive, as cooperative. We have seen that, in Fairfax's Foot regiment, seven companies had employed some of their superiors as agitators.[164] Some officers, lieutenant Chillenden in particular, worked in close contact with soldier-agitators.[165] Some of them joined the soldiers in boycotting the Irish service, and for this reason were summoned before the Houses in late April.[166]

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161 "To his Excellency Sir T. Fairfax", in *A Declaration and Representation.*

162 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 120.

163 C.P. I, p. 146 fn.

164 Cf. above, pp. 33-34.

165 C.P. I, pp. 100-101, 105-106, 111-112.

166 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 207 (April 27-May 4, 1647) BL, E 385 (20), p. 513.

An episode reported by colonel Wogan is particularly revealing on this point. According to his testimony, on the eve of the negotiation at Saffron Walden in May, captain Reynolds of Cromwell's regiment contacted the agents sent by the various regiments with their grievances. He wanted to discuss the situation with them and decide the initiatives to be taken. Yet he did not expect to have a leading role in the discussion. On the contrary, he even asked the agitators permission to be included as one among the others, specifying that he would "do nothing without their consent". The soldiers agreed and named him their chairman.[167] This testimony certainly came from a hostile source, and may contain some exaggerations. However, it is in accordance with other reports of the attitude of higher ranks towards the soldiery. Still at the Saffron Walden convention of May 15-16, some soldiers came uninvited. They intervened in the debate and presented their grievances directly, at a meeting which should have been restricted to senior officers. Their way of addressing their superiors was respectful and even humble, but they were also firm in putting forward their requests. What is more striking is that except for one officer (colonel Sheffield), nobody in the session seemed to notice the anomalous character of the initiative. Skippon himself, who presided at the meeting, showed a tolerant attitude towards the soldiers: he declared that any document submitted by anybody in the army would be accepted by headquarters.[168]

All these episodes apparently indicate a progressive blurring of hierarchical divisions in the New Model, even though, officially, the army retained its traditional structure. This led little by little to a change in the character of the army, which two other factors contributed to. One was the pursuing of the programme of political reform; the other, the search for a political cooperation between soldiers and civilians, and the

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167 C.P. I, p. 426.

168 ibid, pp. 34, 40, 44, 63-64.

integration of the latter in the movement. In a sense, this was a natural consequence of the commitment of the New Model on behalf of the right of the subject. However, the subjects were not seen only as a passive object of the action of defence by the movement, but also as partners in the struggle.

From the beginning, the movement was inclined to see an affinity between its condition and that of the civilian population. On the one hand, it did not straightaway identify itself with the latter. It was always aware of the difference between its status, as a military body, and that of civilians. This is why it generally spoke "in *its own* and the kingdom's behalf", in defence of "*its owne* and the peoples just rights", for "*themselves*... or other the free-borne people of England". It tended to describe itself as a separate though related category, rather than a part of the body of the people.[169]

On the other hand, however, the movement did consider itself part of the people: in the sense both that it enjoyed the same rights as the latter and that it shared the same grievances. Its members saw themselves in a double capacity: they were members of the army, but of the commonwealth as well, soldiers and citizens at the same time. The former condition was not incompatible but coexisted with the latter. When the New Model agitators invited the Lancashire forces to join their protest, they addressed them not as fellow soldiers but fellow citizens, "members of one and the same kingdom", with equal responsibilities towards the latter.[170]

This had important political consequences. While the position of soldier entailed an unquestioning obedience to superiors, that of citizen

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169 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 55; "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, pp. 149-150. Many other contemporary army declarations contain this type of reference.

170 *The Copy of a Letter ... Written Out of Lancashire*, pp. 3-4.

implied a more equal relation, in which the subordinate, too, could make his point of view good with higher authorities. It was on these grounds that freedom of petitioning was claimed. Both the *Vindication* of the officers and the *Declaration of the army* stressed this point. Cromwell, too, according to one of his officers, emphasised that army members had not only a military but also a political status; they had "something else", beside pay, to claim. Therefore, he encouraged them to make demands to Parliament not just "in what concerned them as soldiers" but also regarding the sphere of the state.[171] In fact, the condition of soldiers and that of subjects were connected for the movement. Its members had joined the army just to defend the "right and freedom" of the people. Therefore such a freedom concerned them as well.[172]

In general, the rights the movement wanted Parliament to grant were not claimed as a privilege for its specific army service, but as something that belonged to the soldiers as well as to all other citizens. Stripping them of those freedoms would mean questioning the latter for other subjects as well. The *Solemne Engagement*, in asking for security against arbitrary proceedings for civilians as well as army members, stressed that what had happened to the army could befall the other subjects. Conversely, Fairfax's Foot regiment claimed a right to petition and to legal guarantees for all the people, stressing that what concerned civilians would be their fate as well. Therefore, the movement pledged itself not to disband until not only its particular grievances were redressed, but also those of the subjects in general.[173]

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171 *The Petition and Vindication of the Officers*, p. 2; *The Declaration of the Army*, p. 3; Maseres, *Select Tracts*, p. 398; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 12.

172 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 117, par. 2; ibid., fo 119, par. 1.

173 "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, pp. 149-150; Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 115 bis, par. 1, fo 116, par. 6; C.P. I, p. 23, par. 4, 10; *A Letter from the Army* (June 10, 1647) BL, E 392 (6), pp. 1-2; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", pp. 118-119.

However, its members did not confine themselves to these declarations of principle. They also tried to develop practical cooperation with civilians. As early as May, a leaflet with instructions for the agitators urged them to establish contacts with the inhabitants of the various counties, and act in concert with them. In its propaganda in the spring, the movement presented itself as a mediator between Parliament and the people; as a conduit, through which the voice of the masses could make itself heard. In the *Declaration* of June 14, the claim to speak on behalf of the people was supported by the reference to petitions received by the New Model from various counties, expressing their very political grievances. The movement, therefore, did not just pretend to act in the interest of the people. It also took care to verify to some extent the correspondence between its objectives and those of civilians.[174]

Civilians, in their turn, were ready to respond to the appeal. From mid-June in various counties (Hertford, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Buckingham) groups of army sympathisers addressed petitions to the New Model. They all urged it not to disband until the grievances of the subjects had been redressed. At the end of July, some inhabitants of Devon also petitioned Fairfax, complaining of arbitrary proceedings by local authorities, the judiciary especially. In asking the army's intervention to redress these wrongs, the petitioners claimed that the general had been entrusted with his office with the primary task of securing the freedom of the subjects. Its main function was therefore not military, but political and democratic.[175]

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174 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 63; *A Remonstrance*, conclusion; *A Letter from the Army*, p. 2; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 39.

175 *Four Petitions to his Excellency Sir T. Fairfax* (June 18, 1647) BL, E 393 (7); *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 213 (June 8-15, 1647) BL, E 392 (24), p. 563; N° 214 (June 15-22, 1647) BL, E 393 (19), pp. 566-567; Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 193; Clarke MSS, vol. 110, fo 227.

We have already seen the concern of the movement for the economic problems of the common people.[176] Not being a burden to civilians, through free quarter, was a recurring preoccupation in its literature, and it partly motivated the request of pay and arrears.[177] Sometimes, army members joined civilians in their protests against taxation. In early July, for example, the Commons issued an order forbidding the former to hinder tax officials from collecting the excise. Fairfax immediately communicated it to the various regiments, warning that the offenders (officers and soldiers alike) would be brought before a court-martial. This means that members of all ranks were involved in this obstruction of taxes.[178] The extent of the phenomenon is not clear. Nevertheless, with this kind of initiative, part of the movement practically dissented with the almost contemporary request of an increase of taxation by the high command.[179]

In the early summer, the movement began to consider the possibility of a regular co-operation with civilians in its reform activity. In mid- July, members of the movement sent a circular letter to the counties that had petitioned it, inviting them to come and take part in the deliberations of the General Council, together with army members. They underlined that, since the work of reform undertaken by the movement primarily concerned the people, it was the latter who first of all should be involved. Only the people could really tell what their particular grievances were and propound the most effectual remedies, suitable to

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176 Cf. above, pp. 29-32.

177 See the various lists of regimental grievances in May, Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 109, par. 11, 112 v, par. 11, 115 v, par. 10, 115 v, 116, par. 4, fo 117 v, par. 7, 119v par. 4, 122 par. 9, 123v-124, par. 6. See also *A Perfect and True Copy*, par. 11; Tanner MSS, vol. 58, fo 171, par. 3.

178 *Weekly Account* (June 29-July 7, 1647) BL, E 397 (6) (Friday, July 2).

179 Cf above, p. 31.

their particular condition. The inhabitants of each county should elect two representatives, and send them to the General Council with their grievances and proposals, just as the army regiments did. At the same time, all the proposals put forward by the New Model should be communicated, through their agitators, to the people in the counties, to check the latter's approval of them. The presence of civilian agitators was suggested in relation to the treaty between army and Parliament at Wycombe. However, it was hoped that the system would continue.[180]

In this phase, the movement still did not identify itself with the rest of the population. It rather saw itself as the champion of the latter's rights, a special body charged with the task of defending the people. At the same time, the authors of the letter realised that there was a community of interest between the army members and the other subjects; they were both pursuing the same "just and righteous ends".[181]

The proposal to include civilian representatives on the General Council was not immediately put into practice. At Reading, at the opening of the session on July 16, Ireton, one of the high officers, suggested that they be admitted to the debate and deliberations.[182] His request does not seem to have had any effect at the time. However the committee charged with examining the *Heads of the Proposals*, also debated at Reading, included John Wildman, a civilian Leveller.[183]

From August on, these proposals for a participation of civilians in the activities of the movement began to be really implemented even at an official level. In mid-August, by Fairfax's order, a committee of officers was formed, permanently sitting, where both army members and

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180 HMC, Portland I, pp. 432-433.

181 HMC, Portland I, ibid.

182 C.P. I, pp. 211-212.

183 Cf. [John Wildman] *Putney Projects* (1647) BL, E 421 (19).

common citizens could bring in their proposals. The latter would then be discussed in the General Council.[184] At Putney, as we have seen, a few civilian agitators were admitted for the first time, although it is not clear whether they were also allowed to vote.[185] However, they still came as representatives of part of the soldiery, not of the counties. Nonetheless the constitutional draft discussed there, the *Agreement of the People*, had been debated at a mixed meeting of soldiers and "country gentlemen". The frequent meetings of the new agents with Leveller activists in London also suggest a closer collaboration between civilians and part of the movement.[186]

In early November the agents of Ireton's regiment established contacts with some inhabitants of the county of Hampshire, who agreed to send delegates to work with the New Model agitators in London.[187] Nevertheless, the autumn also saw a decline of the solidarity between the army movement and civilians and of the emphasis on political commitment. The new situation is indirectly documented by the criticism of the movement on this subject by the authors of *The Case of the Army*. The latter complained that the New Model now neglected the petitions sent to it by the people in the Nation and no longer seemed interested in promoting their rights. It was doing nothing to remove the forms of oppressive power exerted on the people, asking for new taxes to be imposed on the latter for its maintenance.[188] This change in attitude was connected to a rejection of the original commitment of the movement and

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184 C.P. I, pp. 223-224; Kishlansky, "Army and Levellers", p. 820.

185 Cf. above, p. 43.

186 C.P. I, p. 240; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 199, 204.

187 "The Copy of a Letter from the Commissary General's Regiment", Worcester College, AA1, 19 (145).

188 "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, pp. 70, 71.

the principles guiding it. The soldiers, the authors of the *Case* argued, were now disavowing the voluntary character and the democratic ends of their engagement. Contrary to their initial claim not to be hired to serve any power of the state, many in the army now tended to think that their only function was to serve the state, as mere employees. They formerly considered themselves as commoners as well as soldiers, entitled to express their opinion about the action of their government. Now, however, they were returning to the idea of the soldiers as a separate category, which should not meddle in state matters. A protest on their part was admitted only when strictly confined to their professional concerns.[189]

When the authors of the pamphlet were writing, this attitude was not yet dominant in the movement, as the debates at Putney on constitutional issues were to show. However, *The Case of the Army* was a warning, the first realization of a phenomenon that was becoming widespread, and in a little more than a month would lead to the dissolution of the movement. The army members ceased to be interested in defending the right of the subject when they stopped seeing themselves also as subjects. At this point, the "raison d'être" of the movement also ceased, and the General Council disappeared.

Finally, there is another factor to consider: the role of religion in the political commitment of the New Model, and in its idea of democracy.

We have already seen the place of freedom of conscience in the debate of the movement. However, the latter was only one of the many issues considered and the others had all a secular character.[190] This does not mean that religion was a peripheral aspect of the political thought of

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189 ibid, pp. 68-69, 71, 73.

190 On this point, cf. also Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 85-86.

the movement. On the contrary, it was often present, even in the discussion of secular matters. In its rebellion against the new rulers (Parliament) the movement felt it was obeying God's will, pursuing goals that were His own. References to the word of God, in the Scripture as in one's spirit, were very frequent in the army literature: both in its public statements and in its internal debate (sessions of the General Council, correspondence among agitators). Resisting unjust established authorities was considered by the movement not only as an individual right, but also as a superior duty of obedience towards God. Rulers who exerted an arbitrary power, ignoring the right of the people, were breaking first of all His Law. Therefore, in rebelling against them, the New Model felt justified and even actively guided by God.

The *Declaration* of June 14 claimed that fighting injustice in the practice of one's government was, on part of the subjects, a means to advance the glory of God. The Vindication of July 15 reminded its readers that God had often reproached, in the Bible, those who acquiesced to unjust acts of their government. Hewson's soldiers stressed that it had always been the Lord who guided their action, in resisting first the king and then Parliament. It had been His help that had enabled them to do something that nobody had done before, for which there were no established points of reference: opposing a recognized authority. *The Agreement of the People* stated that God supported the struggle of the movement in defence of the right of the people, as far as making them prevail.[191]

The movement attributed to God's direction or invoked His assistance not only for its goals, but also for its method of proceeding. The election of agitators, according to Hewson's men, had been inspired by the Lord. Likewise, it was His will that the soldiers' representatives

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191 "A Declaration", in Haller & Davies, p. 56; *Vindication of the Army*, first par.; *The Humble Desires...*, p. 2; "Agreement", in Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 333.

conform to the decisions of their assemblies. When forming the General Council and presenting to Parliament its first demands, the movement also asked for God's help.[192] So did the agitators in their representation to the General Council at Reading, on July 16. They expressed the conviction that God would enable them to carry out their reform work.[193]

The New Model often referred to the Lord when the latter stated its objectives. In the *Remonstrance* of June 21, its second political manifesto, the final request was "that the glory of God may be exalted, Christ Jesus advanced into his throne, Antichrist thrown down". Such a biblical language is particularly striking since it comes at the end of a document focused on distinctively secular political issues. Therefore, the army movement seemed confident that its reform proposals would advance the glory of God as much as the freedom of the subjects.[194]

The New Model agitators, when they explained to their fellow soldiers in some garrisons in the North what their main aims had been, also put the glory of God as first. However, such an aim went together with the freedom of the people from all forms of political oppression, and with an equal distribution of rights among them. At the same time, the agitators still mentioned the safety of the king and the privileges of Parliament; but it was only a passing reference.[195] Major Francis White, a Leveller officer, stated to Fairfax that the main ends of the action of the army should be the glory of God on the one hand and the safety of the people on the other.[196]

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192 *The Humble Desires*, pp. 2-3; "Solemne Engagement", in Wolfe, *Manifestoes*, p. 149.

193 C.P. I, p. 170.

194 *A Remonstrance*, par. 26

195 *The Copy of a Letter Printed at Newcastle* (July 25, 1647) BL, E 398 (16), pp. 2-3.

196 *The Copy of a Letter to his Excellency Sir T. Fairfax* (September 1647) BL, E 413 (17).

The movement always felt confident that its struggle against Parliament's abuses and for the rights of the people had God's blessing. Such a confidence recurs in the correspondence of the agitators: in their letter to the Horse in the Northern Association, to their fellow soldiers in Wales and indirectly in the letter of June 13 to the several counties. In the letter to Wales was expressed the conviction that God's support would annul any contrary force in the world.[197] The appeal to God's guidance in the soldiers' actions was also present. In writing to their fellow soldiers in Lancashire, the New Model regiments asked twice that God direct the former, to enable them to support the protest of the movement and prevent them from being used to repress it. The fifty-two agitators who wrote to the Wales forces also invoked help from Heaven. The anonymous agitator who in mid May wrote to his colleagues, exhorted them "in the name of God" to undertake an autonomous action, for their own rights but also the welfare of the Nation.[198]

These same arguments were to be used by the Leveller elements of the movement to justify their more radical demands and their challenge to the high command. The authors of *The Case of the Army* held it "their duty to God" to present to the high officers what they thought were the betrayals of its first principles by the army movement, and the necessary corrections. That was, in their eyes, the contribution God required from them for His work. He himself had wrought such a commitment in their consciences - so they could not avoid following it. They felt bold enough to ignore orders both of the general and Parliament because, by doing it, they were obeying the superior orders of God. In so doing the new agents were, perhaps unconsciously, repeating an argument often used by

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197 C.P. I, pp. 91, 131, 160-161.

198 ibid, pp. 86, 161; *Copy of that Letter... Lancashire*, p. 4.

puritans and parliamentarians to oppose the crown and the state church.[199]

At the end of the year captain Ingram, an officer of Fairfax's Life Guard, proposed to abolish court martial and extend to the army the system of trial by jury. When the general rejected this proposal, maintaining the old system, Ingram warned him that God had deserted the New Model because it had departed from His will.[200] In the same period another officer, captain Bray, who had been imprisoned for his involvement in the mutiny at Ware, also wrote to Fairfax. In his letter, he vindicated both his concurrence with the mutinying soldiers and his adhering to the *Agreement of the People*, which had caused the mutiny. He too appealed to God, pointing out that he would recognise the authority of the general only insofar as God would admit it. He warned Fairfax that the Lord would judge all, even more those in power for the bad use of it.[201]

Religion was resorted to by the movement not only to justify rebellion against public authorities, but also to motivate its proposals of political reform. The request for the latter was attributed to God's command. This system was applied in the case of freedom of conscience, which was more naturally related to religion; but also in the demand for more secular reforms, from universal franchise to the abolition of monarchy. Such an interaction between political objectives and religious arguments is particularly evident in the Putney debates.[202] There, lieutenant colonel Goffe denounced the old Church of England, but also

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199 "Case of the Army", in Haller & Davies, p. 85; cf. also below, pp. 102-103.

200 C.P. II, pp. 247-248.

201 *A Letter to his Excellency... from Captaine Lieutenant Bray* (January 3, 1647) BL, E 421 (27).

202 On this point, cf. also Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, p. 85.

the king as its accomplice, as the Antichrist against whom Jesus fought. He declared that God himself wanted the overthrow of monarchy and "a great alteration of states": therefore trying to maintain the *status quo* would be opposing God.[203] Captain Allen too was convinced that the latter had entrusted the movement with the task of eliminating the veto power of the crown and the House of Lords.[204] Wildman argued that restoring the king to his power was against the will of God. He did not want mercy when the latter did not go with justice. Now being "merciful" to the king, to the point of giving him back all his power, meant committing an injustice against all those whose rights would be infringed by such a power.[205]

Colonel Rainsborough defended the right to vote of all the people in a state, arguing that God had endowed all men with reason, and wanted them to make use of it: also in choosing those who had to govern them. He then remarked that Scripture did not warrant any restriction of the right to vote to the propertied classes only.[206]

Faith and politics were connected also in the practice of the movement. Protest initiatives and discussion on constitutional drafts were often preceded by addresses to God.

After the *Solemne Engagement*, on the eve of the meeting with Parliament's commissioners at Thriplow Heath, the movement called a day of fasting and humiliation. As we will see,[207] this was a usual practice during the civil war, when the army gathered, on the eve of battle, to ask for God's guidance and help. The movement applied these religious

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203 C.P. I, pp. 281-283.

204 ibid, p 367.

205 ibid, p. 384.

206 ibid, p. 304.

207 Cf. below, pp. 156-158.

exercises to its political objectives. Now it asked God to make it understand whether it could accept Parliament's offers.[208]

Political debate and religious dialogue were also interwoven. At Putney in particular, sessions of the General Council were alternated with prayer meetings. The latter, as we have seen, had also a political significance: the assistance of God was sought in order to be able to make the right choices concerning the state. Conversely, the debate on issues affecting civil society was also interpreted as a religious duty, the commitment of a good Christian. On the one hand, political action could not be separated from the aims of God; on the other hand, He was closely interested in the problems of the collectivity. At Putney, the members of the Council gathered to pray before considering the *Agreement*, and then again to overcome their differences about its proposals. The agitator Everard urged his colleagues to consider speedily how to redress the persisting grievances of the people. He explained that God had sent him a message, warning him about an imminent destruction otherwise. Cromwell invited the new agents to come to a prayer meeting called at the end of the first day of debate, so that they could understand what God wanted them to tell to the Council.[209]

The army movement of 1647 offers therefore an example, perhaps unique in western history, of an army also operating by principles of participatory democracy, and of a democracy inspired by faith, and looking at Scripture for a point of reference.

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208 *An Extract of Certain Papers of Intelligence from Cambridge* (June 21, 1647) BL, E 393 (15), p. 4.

209 C.P. I, pp. 258-259, 280-286, 367-368. For a later example of interrelation between religious meditation and political discussion, see also "A Faithful Memorial of that Remarkable Meeting... at Windsor Castle", in Scott, *Somers Tracts*, vol. VI, pp. 499-501.

Chapter II: The Creation of the New Model Army

The need to reorganise the existing forces, in a more efficient and rational way, began to be perceived early in parliamentary circles.

During the first year of the war, small local armed forces had been formed by Parliament, or more often by personal initiative. Their commanders were always local personalities and were appointed by county committees. Their primary function was the defence of their territory from outside attack. They had been raised in a great hurry, due to an emergency situation. They were, therefore, poorly equipped and trained and not regularly paid. As a consequence, desertions were very frequent. Besides, soldiers agreed to fight only to defend their families and properties: this meant that they could attack even soldiers of parliamentary forces if, for instance, they pillaged the country. The effectiveness of these armies was therefore limited.[210]

To overcome these difficulties, Parliament soon began to look for some kind of co-ordination. To this purpose, in March 1643, it issued an ordinance for raising an army gathering all the forces of South-east England: the Eastern Association, under the command of first Lord Grey, then the Earl of Manchester. The duty of this army was not confined to the defence of its own territory; it also had to pursue the king's forces, wherever they might be. Moreover, the Association was under the control not only of the county committees but first of all of a central committee sitting at Cambridge.[211]

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212 C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge 1974) pp. 33-62.

211 Holmes, *Eastern Association*, pp. 62-96; Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 21; C. Firth, "The Raising of the Ironsides" in I. Christie (ed) *Essays in Modern History* (London 1968) p. 121.

In February 1643 another corps, under the command of William Waller and including five Western counties, was added to the Eastern Association. It almost disintegrated after the defeat at Roundway-down in the ensuing July, but this failure did not lose its commander the trust of Parliament. In November 1643, Waller was appointed to command a new force, the South-Western Association, partly formed by regiments recruited in those counties and partly by some of the London Trained Bands. The latter, however, were reluctant to fight out of the city and Waller had a lot of trouble in trying to keep them at the front. Perhaps also for these reasons, the Association in June 1644 suffered a harsh defeat at Cropredy Bridge, which paralysed its forces for a few months. This succession of failures in the command of local armies persuaded Waller that a new organisation of the army was needed: a professional corps, on a wholly national basis, capable of facing a prolonged campaign and to fight wherever it would be necessary.[212]

Actually, a national army already existed, too. It included 10,500 men and was commanded by the Earl of Essex; Parliament had the control of its funds and recruitment, in the Foot, was by conscription only. However, there was no co-ordination between this national corps and regional forces. Every army had its commander in chief and they did not always follow an agreed strategy. Furthermore, other powers, from county and other committees, were superimposed on these. This is probably why, after inflicting a sensational defeat to the king's forces at Marston Moor, parliamentary armies were unable to exploit the victory; and, in the autumn, the situation even risked reversal.

Waller's army, as we have seen, had disintegrated after Cropredy Bridge. Essex had been forced to surrender at Lostwithiel. At the second battle of Newbury, at the end of October 1644, the Parliament's armies defeated the king's but then virtually allowed them to withdraw.

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212 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, p. 31; Firth & Davies, I, pp. XVI-XVII.

Manchester and others gave up pursuing them, although Cromwell particularly had urged them to do so.[213] Finally, the Earl of Manchester had not been able to block reinforcements to the royalist garrison of Donnington Castle, which could thus break the parliamentary siege with a half of the forces of its enemies. The situation was deteriorating, even though at the beginning of 1644, after the alliance with Scotland, an army of 20,000 men, under the Earl of Leven, had joined the existing ones. In exchange, the English Parliament had accepted to set up a reformed Church according to the Scottish model. This part of the agreement was called the Solemn League and Covenant.[214] On the same occasion was created the Committee of both Kingdoms, to co-ordinate the operations of the two armies. The latter, however, was simply added to the other bodies, making the organisation even less effective.[215]

Anyway, the problems faced were not solely technical: an even stronger role was played by the political-religious divisions within Parliament. Since the beginning of the war, there had been a split in the Houses concerning the attitude to take towards the king. Many MPs were in favour of an immediate truce with Charles I, to present him with peace proposals. They believed that a prolonged struggle would exacerbate divisions and feared the possible consequences for Parliament's followers in case of defeat.

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213 W.C. Abbott (ed) *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (New York 1937) I, pp. 297-299; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 3-4.

214 On the Anglo-Scottish relations between 1638 and 1644 and on the making of the covenant, c.f. J. Morrill (ed) *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context, 1638-1651* ch. I, III, IV (Edinburgh 1990); L. Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution: The Scots and the Long Parliament, 1643-1645* (New York 1976). On the Scottish Presbyterian model of church, see G. Donaldson, *The Faith of the Scots* (Batsford 1990); R.A. Mentzer (ed) *Sin and the Calvinists. Moral's Control and the Consistory in the Reformed Tradition* (Kirksville 1994) ch. V, VI.

215 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 275; Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 23-24.

Initially this position, that of the 'peace party', was shared by the majority of Parliament, leading to the first treaty with the king, at Oxford. At the same time, however, a determined minority opposed to compromise began to form in the Houses. They did not reject negotiations in principle, but insisted on entering into them from a position of advantage, having first secured military victory. This minority – called by historians the war party - was convinced that it would be dangerous to trust in the king alone to guarantee their security. Until late 1644, the majority of MPs did not permanently belong to either of these parties. They fluctuated from one to the other, according to the developments of the military situation or in the treaty with the king. However, after the failure of the treaty at Oxford, the peace party began to weaken. The different attitude towards the king was not merely dictated by considerations of convenience. There was, above all, a different way to consider the institution of monarchy. The peace party, too, wanted to negotiate from a position of strength, but not overwhelming. They would rather have a balance of forces, that would prevent the king from losing all his power: this because they believed the monarch, although with some limits, to be the foundation of any government.[216]

Between 1643 and 1644 another conflict had grown in Parliament concerning ecclesiastical policy. In the autumn of 1643, as we have seen, the Scots had come to aid the English Parliament. In exchange, however, they had required that England adopt the Scottish Presbyterian Church order. In the preceding June, Parliament had summoned the Assembly of Divines to consider the new settlement of the Church.[217]

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216 Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 37-40; Holmes, *Eastern Association*, pp. 109-112.

217 On the Assembly of Divines, c.f. R. De Witt, *Jus Divinum. The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government* (Kampen 1969); R.S. Paul: *The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the "Grand Debate"* (Edinburgh 1985).

The latter soon showed itself to be inclined towards a Scottish model. Such a solution was favoured by the English supporters of a Presbyterian Church (especially among the clergy), who felt very close to the Scots for this reason. However, it was strongly opposed by all those who, though being against an episcopalian order, were also opposed to a rigid Presbyterian Church. They favoured instead a more decentralised organisation, which would allow some degree of autonomy to local congregations. For this reason they were called Independents. Such a polarisation between a Presbyterian majority and an Independent minority characterised both the Assembly of Divines and the Houses.[218] In Parliament, however, it was not only a matter of religious inclinations; national feelings were involved too. Adopting for England a foreign model of the church, moreover under the pressure of a foreign state, seemed to the Independents a lessening of national sovereignty.

The Independents, too, were in favour of a limited monarchy. They, too, would have probably accepted an agreement with the king, if he had consented to their Church model. However, they were less prepared to trust him to grant it spontaneously. Moreover, they wanted to secure an autonomous sphere of action for Parliament, to protect it against possible abuses by the king. Concerning ecclesiastical policy, they were open to a toleration of separatist sects. Besides, they were

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218 On Presbyterians as a political grouping there are not, up to now, specific studies. For an analysis of Presbyterianism from a religious point of view, during the period 1643-1649, see W.A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth* (London 1900) I; T. Liu, *Discord in Zion. The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution* (The Hague 1973); Haller, *Liberty and Reformation.* All these essays also study the religious Independents. On parliamentary Independents see G. Yule, *The Independents in the English Civil War* (Cambridge - Melbourne 1958); V. Pearl, "The Royal Independents in the English Civil War", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, XVIII (1968); D. Scott, "The Northern Gentlemen: the Parliamentary Independents and Anglo Scottish Relations in the Long Parliament", *Historical Journal* XLII (1999). For a debate over the respective positions of Presbyterians and Independents in the political and the religious sphere, cf. "Presbyterians, Independents and Puritans" in *Past and Present*, XLVII (1970) pp. 116-146, (articles by B. Worden, V. Pearl, D. Underdown, G. Yule, J. Hexter, S. Foster).

opposed to an influence of the Church on state matters. On the latter point, they found an ally in Parliament in an anti-clerical party, mainly formed by lawyers and opposed to a rigid ecclesiastical discipline, especially the power of excommunication. This group is called Erastian. Presbyterians, in their polemics with Erastians, accused them of subordinating the Church to the control of the state and of indifference to the issue of morality. In fact, the Erastians simply had a different view on how to achieve godliness.[219]

In the autumn of 1644, the two polarisations (war-party versus peace-party and Independents versus Presbyterians) began to coincide. A great number of Presbyterians concentrated in the peace party, hoping to find in the king an ally against their adversaries in Parliament. In the same period and for the same reason, the Scottish Parliament, until then unitedly in favour of war, began to support the peace party.[220] The unsuccessful military campaign of the summer of 1644 exacerbated all those conflicts. The war, or Independent party became convinced that the army commanders were deliberately sabotaging the war to advantage the king; therefore they began a struggle in Parliament to remove the commanders from their posts.

Among the Independents, Oliver Cromwell, who since the outbreak of the war had stood out for his commitment in recruiting forces for Parliament, began to take a leading position. It was he who had raised and commanded the double regiment of the Ironsides, then incorporated in Manchester's army; a corps which, in the first unsatisfying years of

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219 W. Lamont, *Godly Rule. Politics and Religion 1603-1660* (London 1969) pp. 113-115, 119-122; J.N. Figgis, "Erastus and Erastianism" in IDEM, *The Divine Right of Kings* (Gloucester, Mass, 1970, 2nd edition, repr) pp. 273-276, 285-290; R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals* (Edinburgh 1775) I, p. 420; II, pp. 97, 149-150.

220 R.P. Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter, 1598-1660* (Urbana 1954) pp. 235-236, pp. 249-250; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 45; Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 23-24.

conflict, had been almost the only one to show fighting capacities.[221] Military success gained Cromwell popularity among the public and strengthened his position in Parliament. In this period (1643-1644) he became closer and closer to the circle of MPs around Viscount Saye and Sele, Sir Henry Vane and Oliver St. John: the core of the Independent party. It is in this circle that the decision to oust the parliamentary commanders was made; and it was Cromwell who carried out the initiative most directly. Probably, in his hostility towards Essex and Manchester, there was also an element of personal rivalry. Cromwell had quickly risen to a high position in the army, becoming lieutenant-general of the Eastern Association in January 1644. At this point, he may have aimed at supreme command.[222] However, the religious and political tendencies of the old commanders, as also their way of conducting the war, certainly had a stronger weight.

Essex was the first to be criticised by the war party. As early as mid 1643, when the king's army inflicted upon him several defeats in a short time, he began to be suspected of at least being reluctant to confront the enemy. Manchester, on the contrary, had been reckoned an ally of the war party until the summer of 1644. This is why he had been appointed to command the Eastern Association. As we will see, his ideological position was initially very close to that of Cromwell.[223] From August 1644, his attitude manifestly changed. He, too, began to show not only a lack of efficiency, but laxity in carrying on the war effort, and even a contrary will. Between August and October, he failed to send the needed relief to Essex and Waller's armies and to the garrison of Newark, all in a

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221 A. Woolrych, "Cromwell as a Soldier", in J. Morrill (ed) *O. Cromwell and the English Revolution* (London - New York 1990) pp. 94-95; Firth, "Raising of the Ironsides" pp. 117-123; Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp. 209-211.

222 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 272.

223 Cf. below, pp. 152-153.

dangerous condition. He justified himself alleging that he had not enough men, or that his army had to stay to protect the Cambridge area from enemy raids; or even that the orders of the Committee of both Kingdoms were not clear. He had openly criticised the offensive policy of Parliament as not feasible.[224]

Such a change of position had both religious and political motivations. He was a staunch Presbyterian, and had fought with Parliament to set up a reformed Church of that model. However, the growth of Independency, especially in Parliament, threatened this hope. Victory began to appear a pointless goal; even dangerous, because it could definitively open the way for an Independent Church, or religious anarchy. Then there were political considerations. Manchester was a firm supporter of a peace without a sole winner, reached by negotiation rather than fighting. Like other parliamentarians, he still considered the king the supreme authority after all: an authority which could not conceivably be ignored. There seems to be this conviction, besides the concern over his own safety, in his often quoted sentence that "if we beat the king 99 times yet he is king still, and so will his posterity be after him, but if the king beat us once we shall be all hanged, and our posterity be made slaves".[225]

For Essex religious concerns were not so central, but he had even stronger social and political motivations to avoid a total victory by Parliament. The moderate MP Bulstrode Whitelocke reported that "he was a lover of monarchy and the nobility, which he feared some wanted

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224 *CSPD, 1644-1645*, p. 153, doc 56 XIV; pp. 155-156, doc 56 XVIII; Holmes, *Eastern Association*, pp. 195-197.

225 *CSPD, 1644-1645*, p. 151, doc 56 IX; also p. 148, doc 56 III; pp. 150-151, doc 56 VIII, pp. 151-152, docs 56 X, XI and XII, p. 153, doc 56 XIV, pp. 157-159, docs 56 XX and XXII; p. 160, docs 56 XXIV and XXV; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 4; Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 299; Holmes, *Eastern Association*, pp. 197-198.

to destroy, together with the gentry, the clergy and all constitutions".[226] According to other contemporaries, Essex believed that the English, to free themselves from the yoke of the crown, had fallen into the power of an arrogant populace, and he wanted to devote the rest of his life to reducing this multitude to order.[227]

For Essex, therefore, the preoccupation of preserving the traditional social order was central. It is no accident that his opponents in Parliament were also opposed to a dominance of the old aristocracy, and favoured placing "new men" in posts of command.[228] The opposition between these two commanders and their Independent, or radical adversaries, did not concern, therefore, only military strategy. There was a disagreement on wider political issues.

When Parliament undertook the debate on the progress of the war, the rivalry between Cromwell and Manchester came to the open. Each of them produced a dossier with testimonies against the conduct of the other. Cromwell tried to demonstrate that his commander had deliberately hindered opportunities to confront and defeat the enemy. Manchester countered accusing Cromwell of cowardice, and, even more, denouncing his political and religious radicalism.[229] In the same period the Earl of Essex, together with some Scottish commissioners and

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226 Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 103.

227 C. Hill, *God's Englishman. Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (New York 1970) p. 72.

228 Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p. 265 fn.5; p. 284 fn. 114.

229 *CSPD, 1644-1645*, pp. 143-144, Nov 25, 1644. For a full version of the written charges, see J. Bruce, D. Masson (eds) *The Quarrel between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell* (London 1875) Camden Society, New Series, XII, pp. 78-95; S.R. Gardiner (ed) *A Letter from the Earl of Manchester to the House of Lords* (London 1883) Camden Society Publications, Miscellany, VIII.

English Presbyterian MPs, tried to find some evidence allowing them to impeach him as an "incendiary" (trouble-maker).[230]

On November 25, 1644, the House of Commons considered Cromwell's charges against Manchester; on December 4, those of his superior against him. A committee was formed, chaired by John Lisle, to investigate these conflicting testimonies. However, the committee never completed its work; a different solution was found. Cromwell decided to drop the charges against individuals, and to concentrate on the global problem: the most efficient way to carry out the war.

On December 9, he made a speech in the Commons, in which he suggested that two factors thwarted this objective: the way the army was organised and the double role of generals, who were also Parliament members. The latter circumstance, in his opinion, might create a conflict of interests. Though not saying it explicitly, he made it understood that the two offices needed to be separated: members of the Houses should not also command the army.[231] Other members of the war party officially put forward the proposal. The bill, called the Self-Denying Ordinance, would prevent any member of either House from holding any other office, civil or military.[232] The ordinance aroused strong opposition in both Houses, but particularly in the Lords. The Commons approved it on December 19, but the Lords rejected it on the ensuing January 13. However, Cromwell's other proposal, concerning the re-organisation of the army, was more easily accepted. The treaty entered into with Charles at Uxbridge, in January 1645, had followed a disappointing course since the beginning. On February 18, it was suspended by Parliament, because none of its requests had been consented to by the king's commissioners.

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230 Rushworth, *Historical Collections,* VI, pp. 2-4; Whitelocke, *Memorials*, pp. 111-112; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 6.

231 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp. 314-315, pp. 319-320.

232 Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, pp. 4-5; Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 118; *C.J.*, III, p. 718 (December 9, 1644).

The intransigence shown by the king and the rumours, beginning to spread, of a possible intervention of the French on his side, reunited the parties in Parliament for a while. The ordinance on the New Model was passed by both Houses on February 15, the Self-Denying Ordinance between March 31 and April 3. In March, Essex, Manchester and another old commander, the Earl of Denbigh, resigned their posts. They were, however, appointed to the Committee of Both Kingdoms, which would still have the direction of military strategy.[233] Between March and April, the list of the officers of the New Model regiments presented by Fairfax was also approved and the new commanders appointed, in spite of strong opposition by the Lords and the Presbyterian members of the Commons.[234]

Sir Thomas Fairfax was given the command in chief. He seems to have been accepted more easily because reckoned a moderate, or politically neutral.[235] The command of the Foot was given to major-general Philip Skippon, another known moderate. The post of lieutenant-general, for the Horse, was left blank at first. It was not a coincidence. Cromwell probably aimed at obtaining it, although, according to the Self-Denying Ordinance, he was supposed to be ineligible. On June 10, Fairfax and 17 other officers petitioned Parliament, to request that the post be given to Cromwell. Six days later, the New Model, considered essentially a creation of his, sensationally defeated the royalist forces at Naseby. Amidst the enthusiasm aroused by this victory, Parliament

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233 C. Firth, R.S. Rait (eds) *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum* (London 1911) I, pp. 664-665; Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, pp. 15-16; *C.J.*, IV, pp. 96-97 (April 2, 1645); Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 60; J.S.A. Adamson, "Oliver Cromwell and the Long Parliament" in Morrill, *Cromwell*, pp. 60-63; Stearns, *Strenuous Puritan*, p. 244.

234 Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, p. 8; Whitelocke, *Memorials*, pp. 129-130, 137; R.K.G. Temple, "The Original Officer List of the New Model Army", *Historical Research* LIX (1986), pp. 50-55; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", pp. 268-285.

235 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 38.

acquiesced in his appointment. For the time being, however, Cromwell had to give up attending the House.[236]

The basic principle in the new organisation of the army was the necessity of a united command, to avoid the inconvenience of disagreements between generals. Fairfax had been given virtually complete power, over his men and in the conduct of the war.[237] Besides, the size of the army was reduced, from 29,000 to 22,000 men.[238]

Only one of the 24 regiments forming the New Model, the Dragoons, was entirely new. Eleven of them were drawn from the Eastern Association, which provided the greater supply of men. Eight regiments came from Essex's army and four (of which only two certainly) from Waller's. Manchester's soldiers were almost wholly transferred to the New Model Horse; those of Essex to the Foot. Rather than a new armed force, therefore, it was the result of a more rational re-composition of the existing ones.[239] Under the Lords' pressure, in particular, it had been decided that all army members, and first of all the officers and commanders, should be bound to swear on the Solemn League and Covenant, within twenty days of their appointment or recruitment, in the presence of the general-in-chief and a minister. Fairfax had to provide Parliament with a list of those who had sworn. In this way, it was hoped that religious uniformity would be secured in the army.[240]

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236 *C.J.*, IV, p. 176 (June 16, 1645); *L.J.*, VII, p. 421 (June 10, 1645); Whitelocke, *Memorials*, pp. 140, 144, 146; Adamson, "Oliver Cromwell and the Long Parliament" in Morrill, *Cromwell*, pp. 64-65.

237 Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, p. 7; Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 42-43.

238 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 44.

239 Firth & Davies, I, pp. XVIII-XIX; Kishlansky, *Rise*, ibid.

240 *C.J.*, IV, p. 48 (February 13, 1645); Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, p. 8; Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 40.

Recently, there has been a disagreement among historians on the political significance of the creation of the New Model Army. Kishlansky has argued that both the Self-Denying Ordinance and the project of the New Model were devised as means to reconcile the conflicting parties in Parliament. They aimed to reunite these parties on a common objective and were not a device of the Independents to get rid of the Presbyterians and the peace party. Concerning the list of officers for the New Model, proposed by Fairfax, the Lords certainly rejected many names. However, their objections were not dictated, in general, by political or religious party considerations, but by military criteria. When political considerations operated, their aim was not to make a party prevail over the other, but to create a balance of forces between the two. The presence of Independent or radical officers was counterbalanced by that of moderates or Presbyterians.[241]

According to Gentles and Temple on the contrary, the creation of the New Model was characterised by a political struggle which ended with the victory of the war, Independent and anti-Essex faction over their opponents. The opposition of the Lords to Fairfax's list was politically motivated. Of the men rejected, all whose political or religious background is known were Independents or sectaries, critics of Manchester and of a compromise peace, and opponents of the old Essex-led nobility. All the officers proposed by the Lords as substitutes, whose tendencies at the time are known, were Presbyterians, political moderates or Scots or supporters of Essex. Only two cases - Pride and Foley - contradict this pattern, and they are clearly exceptions.[242] Fairfax's list included both moderates and radicals. The Lords' amendments aimed to exclude all the radical officers and replace them with moderate Presbyterians. The struggle of the radicals in parliament, on the contrary,

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241 Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", esp. pp. 58-68.

242 Gentles, "Choosing of Officers"; Temple, "Officer List", pp. 50-55.

had the objective not of eliminating all conservatives but to ensure a presence *also* of radicals.[243] Concerning the selection of officers, Kishlansky, Temple and Gentles all agree, to some extent, that both radicals and conservatives were included in Fairfax's list.[244] The appointment of the moderate Philip Skippon as commander of the Foot can be seen as also following the policy of balance of forces.

However, there are other instances that show that the two parties in the Houses did not always proceed in agreement. Fairfax's choice as Lord General was much more controversial. Kishlansky counts him as a moderate, religiously neutral, together with Skippon. In fact he was apparently perceived as a Presbyterian, or at least non Independent or sectary, by contemporary newsbooks.[245] At the same time he had already shown radical tendencies. In 1643, he had backed and helped to organise a civilian uprising against royalists in West Riding. In the period of the debate on the New Model, he was connected to, and a friend of, representatives of the anti-Essex faction. Moreover, soon after his appointment, he chose two radical officers, Ireton and Rich, as new regimental commanders. In both cases he did this without consulting the Houses, and in the case of Rich he even ignored two previous contrary votes by Parliament. It was Holles and Stapleton, members of the peace party, who led the opposition to his appointment in the Commons, while the Independents Cromwell and Vane supported him. This very fact suggests that, at least in parliamentary milieux, he was then perceived as a radical.[246]

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243 Temple, "Officer List", pp. 52-53.

244 Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", pp. 66-68; Temple, "Officer List", p. 53; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p. 266.

245 Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", pp. 56, 63.

246 Temple, "Officer List", ibid.; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p. 266; A.J. Hopper, "The Clubmen of the West Riding of Yorkshire during the First Civil War: Bradford Club Law", *Northern History* XXXVI (2000), pp. 63-64.

The Lords, where conservatives predominated, initially rejected Fairfax's officer list. They did not outright refuse the list, but made 57 amendments (about one third of the total).[247] In this case it was the Commons that showed themselves more rigid, refusing to ratify any of the amendments, and pressing the peers to accept the list as it was. When the Lords agreed to drop the names given as substitutes, insisting only on the withdrawal of some of the Commons' appointments, the latter still refused. They even made it understood that, if the peers kept on not approving the list, they would proceed on their own. In the end the list was passed with a very narrow margin, by one vote only, and that given by proxy. Moreover, ten Lords expressed a formal dissent to the way in which the voting had been carried out.[248]

Therefore, although there were attempts at compromise on both sides, the creation of the New Model also saw a struggle between factions. Since all the Lords' amendments were in the end rejected, and since they mainly concerned political or religious radicals, it can be said that it was the latter who had more success. Kishlansky himself agrees that at least some of the Lords changes to Fairfax's list were dictated by political or religious considerations.[249] Nevertheless, it is also true that the New Model list of officers was evenly enough balanced between representatives of both parties. Actually, if some preference was given, it was the Presbyterians, or moderates, who seem to have more benefited from it.

Out of the twenty-three regimental commanders,[250] thirteen can surely be identified as Presbyterians or moderates: Skippon, Holborne,

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247 The list included 193 officers. Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p. 269.

248 Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", p. 69; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", pp. 283-284.

249 Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", pp. 65-66.

250 The New Model had 24 regiments, but two of them, the first of the Foot and the first of the Horse, were led by Fairfax.

Crawford, Fortescue, Weldon, Barclay, Aldrich, Middleton, Sheffield, Rossiter, Sydney, Pye, Greaves. To these can be added Whalley, who would later take part in the army movement, but at the time was reckoned a Presbyterian. After the creation of the New Model six of these officers resigned: Holborne, Crawford, Barclay, Aldrich, Middleton and Sydney. Four of them (Holborne, Crawford, Middleton and Barclay) were Scots. Besides, Weldon was killed in 1646. However, the officers who succeeded them were not always radical. Sydney was replaced by the radical Rich, Holborne and Weldon by two future supporters of the army movement, Sir Hardresse Waller and Robert Lilburne. On the other hand, Aldrich was replaced first by the apolitical Lloyd, and, after the latter's death at Taunton in 1645, by a staunch conservative, Herbert. The same happened to Barclay and Middleton, who were succeeded respectively by Harley and Butler. The latter two, together with Herbert, would be among the more active opposers of the army movement in the spring of 1647. As regards Crawford, he was replaced by Hammond, who in the crisis of 1647, was to keep an uncertain, middle ground position. He was in favour of the Irish expedition and took part in its organization. When his regiment expressed its opposition to the venture, Hammond accepted their choice, but always felt uneasy in the movement. Finally, the apolitical Dutch colonel Vermuyden resigned soon after his appointment and was replaced by Cromwell.[251]

Only six commanders in Fairfax's original list were definitely radicals: Rainsborough, Montague, Pickering, Fleetwood, Livesey and Okey. The resignation of the two moderate colonels, Sydney and Holborne, and of Vermuyden, brought three more radicals into the army commands: Rich, Waller and Cromwell. In 1646, the death of Weldon would enable another radical, Robert Lilburne, to join. Even after these

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251 Cf. Temple, "Officer List", pp. 54-70 and corresponding footnotes; Firth & Davies, I, II, under respective names. Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", pp. 69-70; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p. 269.

changes, however, there would be exactly the same proportion of Presbyterians and Independents among commanders: ten against ten. The three remaining colonels, Fairfax, Hammond and Ingoldsby cannot be ascribed with certainty to either of the parties. We have already considered Hammond and Fairfax. The latter also kept an ambiguous position in relation to the army's protest in 1647. He accepted "de facto" many initiatives of the movement and sanctioned by his signature its main manifestoes.[252] However, he never took part in the sessions of the General Council; and in his memoirs maintained that he had been forced to back the protest of the army because he had lost control over it.[253] Concerning Ingoldsby, he also did not oppose the protest in his regiment and the army in general, but he did not support it, either. He never took part in the army debates and he did not sign any petition.[254] As regards the rest of the cadres, out of a total of 171, 39 can be identified as radicals, supporters of the army movement in 1647.[255] They represent about one fourth of the total. The officers who appear definitely

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252 Cf. *A Declaration of the Engagements...*; CP, I, pp. 116, 129, 146-147.

253 T. Fairfax, "A Short Memorial", in Maseres, *Select Tracts*; see also the minutes of the Reading and Putney debates. Fairfax never spoke in them, unlike the other commanders, Cromwell and Ireton. Neither was he included in any committee. CP, I, pp. 176-214, 226-418. Fairfax's late writings, however, must be taken with caution, considering their apologetical purpose.

254 Firth & Davies, I, p. 375.

255 They are: R. Beaumont, S. Clarke, J. Clarke, J. Cobbett, I. Ewer, J. Jennings, A. Young, W. Cowell, W. Goffe, M. Gryme, T. Reade, J. Jubbes, D. Axtell, J. Desborough, J. Berry, T. Horton, J. Gladman, S. Gardiner, A. Lawrence, W. Rainsborough, T. Harrison, W. Coleman, P. Twistleton, Bush, J. Reynolds, E. Dendy, T. Ireton, R. Margery, M. Tomlinson, J. Neville, C. Bethell, J. Grove, W. Packer, A. Scroope, T. Pennyfather, W. Butler, C. Mercer, T. Pride, T. Kelsey. Cf. Temple, *Officer List*, pp. 54-70 and corresponding notes; BDBR and Firth & Davies, vol. I, II, under the corresponding names.

Presbyterian or political conservatives are thirty-three: also one fourth of the total, although slightly smaller in number.[256]

Many more officers may have been radical, or moderate, whose tendencies we do not know, so the count is largely conjectural. Yet it is interesting that those officers whose persuasions we know are equally balanced between the two groups. Therefore Temple's argument, that the radical party in the Commons tried to include men of both political groups in the list seems justified. It is true however that the Scottish element was completely eliminated from the cadres. It was the Scottish officers who resigned their post "en masse", but their withdrawal so soon from the army shows that they did not feel at home in it. Perhaps some pressure was put on them, since the Scots' commissioners complained that they had been "removed". Moreover, some Scottish regiments which had previously fought with the English parliamentary army were excluded from the New Model. Many of the officers inserted by the Lords but rejected by the Commons were also Scottish. Probably the Scots felt they had been put aside.[257]

To sum up, at least on the level of officers, the New Model Army was not only, or even mainly, a revolutionary force at its creation. Nonetheless revolutionary elements were *also* present from the beginning and they were not a negligible force (one fourth of the total among senior officers, almost a half among commanders). In relation to the future political developments in the army, this is what matters more. Although

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256 They are: S. Barry, T. Jackson, F. Muskett, V. Boyce, S. Gooday, C. O'Hara, T. Bulstrode, N. Kempson, W. Masters, C. Peckam, F. Dormer, J. Innes, J. Melvin, J. Spooner, R. Lundy, A. Lawrence, E. Foley, J. Sheffield, G. Martin, R. Robotham, R. Fincher, R. Le Hunt, A. Markham, H. Middleton, R. Knight, R. Horseman Chute, E. Doyley, C. Fleming, G. Sedascue, J. Farmer, R. Farr, H. Fulcher. Cf. Temple *Officer List*, pp. 54-70 and Firth & Davies under respective names. On Foley, Le Hunt, O'Hara and Barry see Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", pp. 267, 270, 272, 278, 281, and p. 268 on the three Presbyterian captains under Graves.

257 Kishlansky, "Case of the Army", pp. 69-70; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", pp. 284-285.

they were at the beginning a minority, the radicals were later able to win others to their position, becoming in the end (1647) the majority of the army.

As we have seen, the remodelling of parliamentary armies had been accompanied by a political conflict. Its outcome, however, was a reform of the way of conducting the war; not of the way in which the army was organized within itself. When the army was created, in March 1645, it did not differ at all, in its structure and internal rules, from military tradition.[258] It was certainly impossible to discern in it any character denoting a tendency towards more internal democracy. If anything, the New Model was distinguished by the broader discretionary powers granted to the general, and by the rigour with which discipline was maintained. According to the commission given to the commander, Sir Thomas Fairfax, his task was to "fight all rebels, traitors and other common enemies". In spite of the character of the war waged by Parliament against its lawful sovereign, there was here no justification of rebellion by subjects. On the contrary, it was the king's followers who were described as rebels. The task of the New Model army, therefore, seemed to be that of suppressing a rebellion.

Fairfax was given huge powers: to him only appertained the appointment of all officers up to the grade of colonel, and all decisions on the conduct of the war. At the beginning he was under the control of Parliament, through the Committee of Both Kingdoms, the parliamentary body, which had the responsibility of war strategy. However, in the late spring of 1645, parliamentary forces were in a critical situation, with the king's army seeming to threaten London itself. This provoked pressure on Parliament, from public opinion, to give Fairfax full operating powers. As a consequence, on June 9, 1645, the Committee of Both Kingdoms

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258 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 70.

officially transmitted all decisional powers to the new commander, concerning both strategy and army appointments. [259]

It is true that, before making any decision, he had to consult his council of war, formed by all superior officers and the administrative staff (clerks, chaplains, physicians, victuallers), plus four parliamentary commissioners who ensured communication with the Houses. In the council of war, discussion was free and there was a final vote. The sessions' minutes often report "much discussion", "large debates and consultations", "earnest and protracted debate". The council tended to adopt the same proceedings usual in parliamentary debates: on every subject, motions were proposed and then voted. Sometimes, a smaller committee was appointed to prepare some proposals to be discussed in the next session. This system of debate would be taken on in the General Council of 1647. In 1645, however, it was merely a formal proceeding (quite apart from the fact that soldiers and inferior officers were excluded from debate). The general was fully free to make the choice he wanted, regardless of the vote expressed by the majority or even all of his officers. Besides, in voting, a principle of unanimity was followed, for which the dissenting minority was bound to conform to the majority in the final motion. Furthermore, the issues discussed in the council of war were of strictly military nature (recruiting, administration of justice, equipment and supplies, campaign strategy).[260]

The New Model council of war did not basically differ from those of the former parliamentary armies. There too, only commanders could decide in the end, while the other officers had purely consultative functions, and at the discretion of the generals. In the New Model,

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259 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 55-47; *CSPD*, 1644-1645, p. 578.

260 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 56-58.

indeed, decision-making powers were further restricted, because they were entrusted to Fairfax only, not to several commanders.[261]

Finally, the New Model council was not a permanent institution. It actually worked for the first three months only (June - September 1645). Later, the splitting of the army into several units, to enable the latter to fight more effectively on the level of counties, made a single council of war impossible to sustain. The centre of decision remained at headquarters, for here Fairfax and the general's staff were.[262]

The structure of the New Model was, therefore, strongly centralised and oligarchic, even more than former parliamentary armies. Discipline, as well, was even stricter than in the past. The new army had kept the military code issued by the Earl of Essex for his army in August 1642, the Lawes and Ordinances of Warre. The latter, in their turn, closely followed the regulations in force in other armies, both in England and abroad. The closest English model was the rules established for the corps sent by Charles I into Scotland in 1638-1640, to quell the rising against his imposition of the Book of Common Prayer there.[263]

Given the situation of ideological conflict, the similarity with the code of the royalist army is particularly striking: not only in the rules, but also the penalties inflicted in case of transgression. In both armies, for example, complaining about one's conditions in the camp was considered a kind of mutiny, punished by death. In both, the sentence for blasphemy was having one's tongue bored by a red hot iron.[264] In some points,

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261 *CSPD, 1644-1645*, October 14, 1644, pp. 39-40.

262 Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 61-62.

263 On the Anglo-Scottish war of 1638-1640, cf. M.C. Fissel, *The Bishops' War. Charles I Campaign against Scotland* (Cambridge 1994); D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolutions*, 1637-1644 (Newton Abbott 1975); P. Donald, *An uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish Troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge 1990).

264 B. Donagan, "Did Ministers Matter? War and Religion in England, 1642-1649" *Journal of British Studies* XXXIII (1994) pp. 133-134, 137, and "Codes and Conduct in the English Civil War", *Past and Present* CXVIII (1988) pp. 85-86.

actually, Essex's ordinances were even more rigid than the royalist ones. For example, the former extended military justice to various categories of civilians who were in contact with the army in one way or the other: victuallers who delivered wasted foods, those who helped deserters, camp followers who lured soldiers away. Royalist articles only considered the first case.[265]

The only apparent contradiction to such a rigour concerned the prohibition of iconoclasm: this was an important clause in the royalist military code while it was not included in the parliamentary one. In this case, probably, puritan hostility to religious images had prevailed. Parliamentary propaganda often tended to justify it in some way. Parliament itself had declared it legal in its ordinance of April 4, 1643. It had even appointed inspectors (or "visitors") to oversee the demolition of sacred images and ornaments in churches.[266]

It is true that some clauses in Essex's code, though still within a strictly repressive logic, tried to mitigate the more inhuman aspects of the war. For example they guaranteed some measure of protection to the civil population and even to the enemy. Concerning the latter, military authorities took care that the articles of surrender should be observed. An enemy soldier who gave himself up must not be ill-treated or humiliated, a circumstance which had often occurred in the first years of the war and which Fairfax was immediately concerned to put an end to.[267] The *Ordinances of War* inflicted death without mercy to those who violated a safeguard, that is to say harmed anyone who had formerly received

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265 Donagan, "Codes and Conduct", p. 83.

266 Donagan, "Did Ministers Matter?", p. 134. On the relation between puritanism and iconoclasm c.f.. *The Journal of William Dowsing* (Woodbridge 1786); M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford 1998) 2 vols.; J. Morrill, "The Church in England", in idem (ed) *Reactions*. As we will see, even military commanders occasionally encouraged iconoclasm (cf. below, p. 201).

267 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 294-295.

guarantees for his safety, or even freedom from imprisonment.[268] So it was forbidden to kill the enemy who had surrendered, although in this case the penalty in case of transgression was not specified.[269]

Other regulations show attention for the needs of civilians, although they might have been convenient from a military point of view too. The objective of military authorities was of course that of avoiding conflicts with the local population.[270] However, there was as well a willingness to guarantee in some way a sphere of personal freedom.[271] Finally, another group of clauses, relating to the administration of justice, were aimed at safeguarding the legal rights of soldiers, on the same level with all other citizens.[272]

The great majority of the other regulations, however, is striking in their often disproportionate severity. The death penalty, for example, was decreed in 46 cases, a half of the total. Only some of the offences included were serious ones. Many of them just concerned matters of discipline. Soldiers guilty of rapes and robberies were sentenced to death as well as those responsible for thefts of over 12 pence. The only mitigation was that, in some cases, an alternative sanction was possible.[273] Another limitation was apparently the custom to execute only one or two soldiers out of the whole, when many were guilty of the same

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268 "Laws and Ordinances of Warre, established for the Better Conduct of the Army"; in Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, Appendix L, art. VII, p. 411.

269 ibid., art. V, p. 417.

270 Donagan, "Codes and Conduct", p. 86.

271 "Laws and Ordinances" in Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, art. V, p. 413, art. VII, p. 415, art. XIX, p. 416, arts. I, II, IV, p. 414, art. XVIII, p. 416.

272 ibid., art. X, p. 422.

273 Donagan, "Codes and Conduct", p. 86, fn 79; "Laws and Ordinances", ibid., esp. arts. II and IV, p. 412, art. I, p. 411, art. VI, p.411, art. VIII, p. 412, art. I, p. 414, art. II, p. 417, art. III, p. 414.

offence. However, such a practice had a cruel side too, because the accused had to cast lots for their lives.[274] Besides death, there were various other types of punishment which, though not killing the guilty person, could severely damage his physical condition: from flogging to the cropping of the ears and the boring of the tongue with iron; the last was inflicted for cursing. The offences punished in these ways also varied in their seriousness: pillage, violence against persons, but fraud or lack of respect towards superiors as well. Both officers and under-officers were authorised to some extent to beat their men as a correctional measure. A soldier who reacted violently to such treatment was liable to death: this point was specified twice.[275] The rigour of the rules tended to apply to officers too. It is true that, in some cases, the latter could suffer a milder penalty than soldiers, for the same misdemeanour. A soldier who left the camp without warrant was sentenced to death; an officer who spent a whole night out of quarters, on the other hand, only risked cashiering.[276] He incurred the same penalty if he got drunk, while a drunken soldier was punished at discretion (which could mean with corporal punishments).[277] In this respect, the New Model did not break at all from the practice of Essex's army. There, too, the soldiers who failed to "repair to their colours", the day they were summoned at headquarters, risked a capital sentence, the officers only cashiering.[278] Expulsion was apparently the commonest penalty inflicted on officers. Other punishments, more painful or humiliating, were for soldiers.

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274 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, p. 287; "Laws and Ordinances", ibid., art. IV, p. 410.

275 ibid., arts. II and V, p. 411; Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 288-292.

276 ibid., arts. XII and XVI, p. 417.

277 ibid., art. I, p. 412.

278 *CSPD 1644-1645*, p. 106 (November 8, 1644).

At the same time, however, the greater power officers were entrusted with could mean heavier responsibilities, which soldiers were free from. The most relevant case, perhaps, is that of the surrender of a beleaguered fort: a commander who decided to surrender when his post was judged still tenable by Parliament or the headquarters, was liable to a death sentence.[279] Besides, a great number of regulations which included the death penalty were not specifically referred to officers or soldiers; but to "everybody" or "nobody" in the army. In the case of mutinies, while only one or two of the condemned soldiers had to die, none of the officers was to be spared.[280]

It was particularly in the enforcement of regulations that the New Model army stood out for a stricter discipline than the royalists or former parliamentary armies. We have seen that its Ordinances mainly followed the articles of war of other contemporary armies. Elsewhere, however, they were, in practice, mitigated by their infrequent application. In the New Model, on the contrary, they tended to be regularly applied. Some of the Essex articles, relating to the administration of justice, were modified after the creation of the new army to facilitate criminal prosecution.[281] The extant documents concerning the enforcement of sanctions in the New Model mainly cover the Commonwealth and Protectorate periods. It is very likely, however, that rigour and regularity in inflicting punishments characterised Cromwell's army from the beginning. Later, evidence on disciplinary sanctions refers to them as to a usual practice, not a new trend.[282]

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279 "Laws and Ordinances", in Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, art. III, p. 410; the ensuing art. V specified the conditions that made a fortress non-tenable, justifying the surrender. Cf. also Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 304-305.

280 "Laws and Ordinances", ibid., art. IV, p. 410.

281 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, p. 285.

282 ibid., pp. 284-310.

Moreover, a few examples, especially as regards the death penalty, also concern the early years. Since the first march west of the New Model, in May 1645, Fairfax decided to give a taste of the type of order that would be enforced in the army from then on. He summoned at once a court martial to prosecute a number of offences committed in the previous months. The court passed many capital sentences, two of which were immediately executed. Fairfax then had his soldiers march before the hanging bodies of their companions (a deserter and a mutineer) as a deterrent against these facts happening again.[283] The deterrent logic was the same as was applied in the royalist army; there, too, the bodies of hanged soldiers were exposed so that all the others could see them.[284]

Approximately in the same period, Fairfax had several soldiers hanged for running from the enemy; another one, for cursing, had his tongue bored with a hot iron.[285] In the ensuing November, another curser was branded and four soldiers guilty of looting were hanged.[286] Hugh Peters, chaplain in the New Model, recalled with satisfaction in one of his sermons that Fairfax had ordered a soldier to be shot on the spot for robbing enemy prisoners after the surrender of Langford House[287]. Cromwell, who had a central role in the projects on the New Model army, also conceived the remoulding of the army as establishing a better

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283 ibid., p. 286.

284 Donagan, "Codes and Conduct", p. 87.

285 *Perfect Passages*, No 30 (May 14-21, 1645) BL, E 260 (39), pp. 233-240.

286 *The Moderate Intelligencer*, No 38 (November 13-20, 1645) BL, E 319 (25), p. 204; Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 65.

287 H. Peters, *God's Doings and Man's Duties* (April 2, 1645) BL, E 330 (11), p. 23.

discipline into it.[288] In spite of some contradictions, as we will see,[289] maintaining order amongst the soldiers had been his constant concern since the beginning of the war. His regiment, the Ironsides, stood out for their internal discipline and readiness to obey: the latter, a quality of which Cromwell showed his appreciation on more than one occasion.[290]

However, the frequency and even the gravity of the punishments inflicted are not the only striking characteristics in the organisation of the New Model army. If we think of the protest which would develop from the rank and file from March 1647, what is more blatantly different in the early situation is the all-pervading character of the authority exercised, the utter subordination of the soldiers to their superiors. The soldiery was continuously under the control of the officers: the latter had to watch closely over their activities and even speech, and were called to account in court-martial for inattention on this matter. In this respect, however, regulations were not so strictly followed because many officers, especially if married, tended to absent themselves from their regiments, even for long periods. Threats of expulsion were frequent, but not always put into practice.[291] To guarantee surveillance, anyway, soldiers were never allowed to leave their superiors without their permission. Even orderlies who departed from their quarters without giving notice to their officer were sentenced to death.[292] Moreover, soldiers were almost

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288 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 236. Recently, the relevance of the role played by another member of the Commons, John Lisle, has been emphasised. He was appointed chairman of the commission which had to organise the New Model: However, Lisle was an ally of Cromwell and his party in the Commons and he acted in close cooperation with him. C.f. Temple, "Officer List", pp. 50-51.

289 Cf. below, p. 201.

290 Firth, "Raising of the Ironsides", in Christie, *Essays*, pp. 158, 160.

291 "Sir Symonds d'Ewes Journal of the House of Commons", Harleian Mss, vol. 166, fo 142 bis (November 20, 1644); Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 66.

292 "Laws and Ordinances", in Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, art. III, p. 411.

always ordered to be silent: during battles but even when marching or taking up quarters, so as to be always ready to listen to, and carry out, the orders given.[293] One was punished at discretion, not only for actually neglecting his duty, but also for not performing it well, in the opinion of superiors.[294] The coercive character of regulations extended not only to specifically military matters, but also to moral and religious behaviour. Taking part in public prayers was compulsory, and being absent from them often could involve being severely punished.[295]

Even more serious than laxity in obeying was disputing the orders received, or military rules in general. In the category of "mutiny" were included, beside real acts of violence, the assembling of soldiers to claim their pay.[296] There was no gradation of the respective seriousness of different crimes: making speeches to justify or encourage rebellion was put on the same level as actively taking part in a violent revolt.[297] Even complaints about one's conditions at quarters were equated with mutiny and could, therefore, be punished with death.[298]

The need to ensure respect for discipline had been one of the reasons which persuaded Parliament to reform the army. In the first years of the war, this respect had been very much lacking. Desertion and insubordination, like looting and vandalism against civilians, were very frequent.[299] Even the remoulding of the army had not been a painless

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293 ibid., art. IV, p. 411.

294 ibid., art. VI, p. 410.

295 ibid., art. III, p. 409.

296 ibid., arts. I and VI, p. 411.

297 ibid., art. VIII, p. 412, art. VI, p. 411.

298 ibid., art. XV, p. 416.

299 N. Wharton, *Letters from a Subaltern Officer of the Earl of Essex's Army, written in the summer and autumn of 1642,* ed H. Ellis (London 1854) pp. 4-8; Firth, *Cromwell's Army,* pp. 279-281.

process from the point of view of discipline. It involved a re-composition of former forces, which meant reduction of effectives, replacements of commanders etc. Many soldiers, and especially the officers, refused to be reduced. On the other hand, a great number of men did not want to re-enlist, so that many corps did not reach the required number. As a consequence, Parliament resorted to conscription, using rather rough methods.[300] In the New Model Foot, therefore, conscripts outnumbered volunteers. Even those who enlisted voluntarily, especially in the Foot, were attracted mainly by the prospect (later disappointed) of regular pay.[301]

In March, Parliament had entrusted the new major-general, Philip Skippon, with the integration of Essex's soldiers into the new army. He carried out his task very successfully. On the one hand, he made concessions for what concerned material needs: the reduced officers and soldiers would immediately be given two weeks' arrears, and in addition a receipt to guarantee full payment later. The new recruits would have two weeks' pay in advance. On the other hand, Skippon showed himself resolute to have Parliament's orders obeyed. This is what he announced to the soldiers at the first rendezvous of the army at Reading, on April 6. This speech is particularly revealing of the continuity of the New Model with the past on matters of authority and obedience. It is based on the need and duty to obey the established authority "in conscience to God and love to our country". Obedience must be "ready and cheerful" and is wholly separated from any judgement of the individual on the nature of the orders received. It is the opposite of what the movement of 1647 would assert. The refusal to obey is always attributed to the predominance of personal interest (ambition, malice) over the concern for common good. Authorities, on the contrary, always aim at it. Yet

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300 *C.J.*, IV, p. 100 (April 4, 1645).

301 J.P. Kenyon, *The Civil Wars of England* (London 1988) pp. 139-140.

rebellion harms, over and above society, those who promote it. The damage inflicted on the country by resistance against its rulers in the end will always rebound on the rebels.[302] The accordance with tradition was evident even in the official war objectives attributed to the New Model. In the ordinance of February 15, it was stated that the army had been raised "for the defence of the king and Parliament, the true protestant religion and the laws and liberties of the Kingdom".[303]

Liberties appeared as the last one in the list, after the privileges of the crown and Parliament. Moreover, "liberties" implied a more restricted concept of rights, as belonging to some categories of citizens; not, as it had been presented in other parliamentary declarations, and it would often be said in the army manifestoes of 1647, a general liberty, or right, of all the subjects.[304] Equally significant was the fact that priority was given, on the contrary, to the defence of the king: at least officially, he was still identified with the supreme authority of the nation. The wording of the ordinance was the same used in parliamentary declarations at the beginning of the civil war. The only relevant difference was in the cancellation of the clause committing the general to protect the person of the king: a clause which had been included in the commission granted to the Earl of Essex in August 1642 and in the Solemn League and Covenant. With time, however, such a choice had proved more and more impracticable; it had come to be reckoned as one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of parliamentary forces. At first, the

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302 Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, p. 17; reprinted in Firth and Davies, *Regimental History*, II, p. 428.

303 Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VI, ibid.; *L.J.* VII, p. 204 (February 15, 1645).

304 Cf. below, pp. 129-132.

Lords objected to the abandonment of the clause, but when the Commons pointed out that it no longer corresponded to reality, they acquiesced.[305]

The picture we have drawn makes it difficult to conceive the organisation of the New Model army as an ideal environment for the development of autonomous political experiences, especially with democratic character. Moreover, official contemporary evidence seems consistent in showing that, at least from April 1645 to the Summer of 1646, the army was engaged only in military duties: maintaining discipline, confronting the enemy, solving material problems (arrears, shortage of supplies, etc.).[306] At first sight, therefore, the protest movement of March 1647 appears as a sudden and somewhat inexplicable phenomenon; or an event whose real significance should be reconsidered.[307]

However, I think that, though not manifestly, and with a long term action, two factors stimulated the making of a democratic political consciousness in the New Model army. One is the wartime propaganda, in newspapers and pamphlets or by military commands (newsletters, speeches by officers) or privately undertaken by ministers and chaplains. As we shall see all this propaganda, contrary to military directions, often emphasised the right of any subject to resist an unjust authority. In this way it was implied that any subject was capable to judge the proceedings of its rulers.

The other influencing factor is less direct, but perhaps had a more lasting effect. It is given by the political-religious experiences, mainly connected to puritanism, which had been developing in England since the eve of the civil war and earlier. Both factors had an influence on the way

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305 Gardiner, *Documents*, p. 269, doc 58, paragraph III; *L.J.*, VII, pp. 297-298 (March 31-April 1, 1645); Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 46-48.

306 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 53, 70.

307 Cf. above, pp. 7-9.

of thinking of the army members. In the long run, they helped to undermine from within the very basic principles upon which the army was organised. It is these factors that we are now going to examine.

Chapter III: The Religious and Political Context

The English civil war had both religious and political motivations. On the one hand, it was a struggle for a different model of church and of religious faith. The parliamentary party can also be identified with the strong puritan minority which opposed the order of the Church of England. On the other hand, it was a struggle over the way in which the country should be ruled. The parliamentarians were those who wanted to ensure a sphere of rights and free initiative to the governed towards their governors. In this chapter, I will examine the impact of civil war religion and politics on the politicization of the New Model Army. I will try to identify the processes, in the church and in the state, more likely to help the formation of the democratic consciousness which produced the movement of 1647.

The religious context: Puritanism. Concerning religion, I wish to investigate the role of Puritanism in raising a democratic consciousness among the parliamentarian party. I will focus on three aspects: the libertarian and egalitarian side of Puritanism in general; those groups and tendencies within it which developed forms of democratic participation in communal affairs; the political implications of millenarian theories. Each of these phenomena influenced in some way also the process of politicisation of the New Model Army.

Until a few decades ago, the struggle for true religion and that for political liberty in the civil war were seen as interwoven. Puritanism was the religion of liberty, extending to the secular sphere; conversely, the struggle for the rights of the subjects had religious implications as well.[308] More recently, however, the religious motivations of the civil war

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308 W. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York 1938); *Liberty and Reformation;* Woodhouse, introd. to *Puritanism;* M.Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (London

have been emphasised as separate from and even contrasting with political ones. The stress has been put on matters of worship, or strictly ecclesiastical policy, as the main grounds for disagreements.[309] Some historians have directly questioned the very link between Puritanism (at least the mainstream) and the modern concept of democracy. Puritan faith, they have argued, was actually repressive and authoritarian in many respects. Its aim was to establish a godly, not a free or egalitarian society in principle.[310]

These aspects surely are part of Puritanism and are still present during the civil war period. Nevertheless, I think that repression represents only one side of puritan ideology, rather than defining it as a whole. There were other influences at work within Puritanism. Its very basic principles - absolute submission to God, theory of election, anti-popery - might be used to undermine the existing social order as well as to maintain it. Stressing the authority of God above all others tended to reduce the importance of worldly powers, even the godly ones. They were just divine instruments, without being endowed with a superior nature of their own.[311]

1965); B. Manning, "Puritanism and Democracy1640-1642" in D. Pennington, K. Thomas (eds.) *Puritans and Revolutionaries* (Oxford 1978).

309 Morrill, *Nature*, pp 60-80. For other interpretations, underlining in different ways the religious dimension, see P.Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Basingstoke 1989); C. Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War,* chs III, IV, V; A. Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London 1981) conclusion.

310 J.C. Davis, "Religion and the Struggle for Freedom in the English Revolution" *H.J.* XXXV (1992); W. Lamont, "Puritanism and Liberty" in idem, *Puritanism and Historical Controversy* (London 1996); P. Collinson, "Magistracy and Ministry" in idem, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford 1982).

311 Walzer, *Revolution*, pp. 118-119, 160-161; P. Lake "Antipopery", in Cust, Hughes, *Conflict* p. 74; C. Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth Century England* (London-New York 1990) pp. 47-48; J. Holstun, *A Rational Millennium. Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth Century England and America* (Oxford 1987) p. 91.

Moreover, while the godly society puritans aspired to had to conform to a rigorous order, the latter did not necessarily coincide with human institutions. Actually, the opposite might happen. While puritans still retained the principle of hierarchy, they rejected the traditional one, based on social position or political office. Their hierarchy was based on personal behaviour and moral qualities. This meant, in practice, that people of inferior social rank might criticise their superiors, if the latter seemed to them to behave wrongly. We have seen that God was considered the sole true source of authority for the individual, without the intermediation of any other human institution. However, God is invisible, and His will is never directly manifested. Therefore, everybody has to interpret His signs for themselves. This implies that human beings have some capacity for judgement, and autonomy of action.[312]

This capability for personal judgement, identified with conscience, was so much exalted by puritans as to put it above, and potentially against, other sources of authority. The idea of God as sole legitimate authority in the universe of course helped this development. Obedience to the state was still a duty, but conditional rather than absolute. Above human laws and institutions there was conscience, which was God's voice in the individual. The New Model Army was to be inspired by the same principle in its political protest. As we have seen, the new agents especially justified insubordination to their military superiors with the need to conform to the higher authority of God.[313]

Puritanism itself arose because of dissatisfaction with the existing order in the church. Puritans' inclination towards change, moreover, tended to include not the church only, but society as well. In spite of the central role attributed to conscience and spiritual life, in puritan ideology

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312 Walzer, *Revolution*, pp. 167-170; Cust, Hughes, *Conflict*, p. 22; M. Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge 1987) pp. 176-178, 192.

313 Cf. above, pp. 65-66.

the collective, social dimension was also strongly present. It was society, not just individuals, which had to be made godly. In this way, through Christian duty, the common people were given a more active role in the organization of their state.[314]

However, as we have seen, this aim of reforming society was pursued in two different directions. On the one hand, it could lead to the complete abolition of any hierarchy, replaced by the distribution of power equally amongst all the people. On the other hand, it could lead to the rule of a new hierarchy, based no more on social status but on the degree of godliness. Puritanism could be an ideal of religious, and consequently political freedom, based on individual conscience. However, it could also be an ideal of godly discipline of the social body, tending to destroy both individual liberty and equality.[315]

In the long term, these two contrasting tendencies produced two different models of church. One, fostered especially by the clergy, was that of the church as an institution, led by ministers. The laity would be subjected to their control and would have to maintain them through tithes. Membership of the church would be compulsory, extending to all the people living within the boundaries of a given parish. The other model is that of the church as a community, with an informal and voluntary character, created by an initiative from below, from the mass of believers.[316] The former is the Presbyterian church order, a version of which Parliament tried to establish in England during the civil war. The latter, in its various forms (non separating, separating etc.) is the congregational model, which opposed the former and in the end

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314 Walzer, *Revolution*, p. 170; Haller, *Rise*, pp. 84-86; Todd, *Puritan Social Order*, pp. 14, 17-18, 200-202; S. Baskerville, *Not Peace but a Sword. The Political Theology of the English Revolution* (London 1993) pp. 5-8.

315 Walzer, *Revolution*, p. 108, Holstun, *Rational Millennium*, p. 91.

316 P. Collinson, *Godly People* (London 1982) pp. 539-541.

prevented its establishment. It is the latter that is likely to have influenced the forming of a democratic political consciousness, among Parliament's followers and in particular in the New Model.

Fairfax's army was certainly a composite body from a religious point of view, as it has been argued.[317] Nevertheless, a congregational tendency can be discerned at least among those army members who were to make themselves known as militants of the movement. Concerning agitators, a sure evidence can be found only for three, out of the forty-eight who operated in the New Model.[318] William Allen and Thomas Shepard, who with Edward Sexby were sent to Parliament as representatives of the eight regiments in April 1647, were both Particular Baptists.[319] Shepard in 1633 had been among the organisers of the seven Particular Baptist churches of London. Robert Everard, one of the Leveller-oriented new agents elected in the autumn of 1647, was a General Baptist.[320] There is some information also about another New Model trooper, Robert Lockyer. Actually he was not an army agitator. However, in April 1649 he was the leader of a mutiny, for lack of pay but with Leveller overtones, in a troop of Whalley' s regiment.[321] His behaviour and language on that occasion suggest that he may have been active in the movement of 1647 as well, in the Leveller wing. Lockyer might have been the sixteen year old Baptist who had himself rebaptised

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317 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 72; A. Lawrence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains* (Woodbridge 1990) pp. 85-86.

318 For a list of agitators, see CP I, appendix D.

319 On this episode cf. above, p. 36.

320 M. Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints* (Cambridge 1977) p. 156; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie, p. 87.* On the Baptists, divided into Particular and General, cf. J.F. Macgregor, B.Reay, *Radical Religion in the English Revolution* (Oxford 1984) pp. 25-60. Tolmie, *Triumph*, ch. IV; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* PP. 30-31.

321 *A true Narrative of the Late Mutiny...in Captain Savage's Troop* (May 1, 1649) BL, E 552 (18). Gentles, *New Model Army,* pp. 326-329.

in January 1642 and soon after volunteered for Parliament.[322] However, the problem with soldier agitators is that there is no information at all about most of them. For officers there is more evidence, probably both because of their more limited number and their prominent position.

Particular Baptists were especially numerous among the latter. Between 1645 and 1646, Fairfax's Horse regiment numbered eight of them: Kelsey, Sadler and Axtell, lieutenant colonels; and the captains Packer, Gladman, Spinage, Harrison, and Hobson. Axtell, Hobson, Harrison, Gladman and Packer would be all involved in the army movement. Hobson, like Shepard, had been an organiser of the particular Baptist seven churches of London. He signed the confessions of faith of 1644 and 1646. Besides, he made himself noted for a frequent practice of preaching and for trying to create spontaneous congregations within the army.[323] Packer had already been arrested in 1644, when he was lieutenant of the Ironsides, for publicly professing Baptist ideas.[324] There were many Particular Baptists in other New Model regiments: colonel Robert Lilburne, who would be an activist in the movement since March 1647; colonel John Mason, cornet Peter Wallis, the captains Holmes, Deane and Brayfield, all officer agitators, and the lieutenants Empson and Webb. The latter was among the subscribers of the seven churches confession of faith in 1644; captain Henry Pretty, another officer agitator, was instead a General Baptist.[325] Other officers had different sectarian affiliations. Colonel John Okey was a member of the congregation of

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322 Tolmie, *Triumph,* p. 156.

323 On lay preaching among separatists and in the New Model, cf. below, pp. 114-115, and 272-279.

324 A. Thomson, *Hertfordshire Communities and Central Local Relations c. 1645-1665,* PhD Thesis (London 1987) p.308; Temple, "Officer List" p. 62, fn 95, p. 67, fn. 142; Kishlansky, *Rise, p. 300,* fn. 92; Tolmie, *Triumph,* p. 157; Firth & Davies, I, p.62.

325 Firth & Davies, II, p. 453 ; CP I, p. 438; Tolmie, *Triumph,* pp.22, 24, 157-159; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* p. 61.

Henry Jessey; colonel Thomas Pride a member of the intransigent separatist community of John Duppa, since the 1630s. Lieutenant Edmund Chillenden belonged to the congregation of Samuel How, for which he had been arrested in 1641. Colonels Rainsborough and Rich were already considered religious radicals in 1645, and for this reason the Lords had opposed their appointment to the New Model. However, their specific sectarian affiliation is not known. They were both to take part in the army movement, although Rich with a moderate position.[326] Colonel Hewson and commissary Cowling, also involved in the movement, were also probably separatists since they both practised lay preaching.[327] Colonel Fleetwood, too, at least sympathised with separatist tendencies: in June 1645 he intervened to defend two of his officers who had been arrested for preaching and participating in conventicles.[328]

This does not mean that the movement as such, or even its majority, was sectarian. However, separatism was certainly a component of it, and helped to shape its political commitment. The similarity between the modes of debate in the General Council and in separatist congregations, and the widespread practice of lay preaching in both groups indicate a clear influence of radical Puritanism on the movement.

The Congregational Model is subdivided into two tendencies: the proper Congregationalism, or Independency and separatism. The latter implied a total, permanent separation from the national Church, seen as irreparably corrupted, and the formation of the true church by common

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326 BDBR III, pp. 76-78; Kislansky, *Rise, pp. 42-44;* Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p, 272; Firth & Davies, I, p. 145.

327 Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* p. 87. Temple, "Officer List", p. 62 fn 93, BDBR, II, pp. 82-83.

328 Cf. below, p. 273.

believers and at once. The true church, in its turn, was identified with a free, voluntary, self-sufficient community, knitted together by a covenant. Congregationalists, too, wanted to separate from the Church of England. However, their separation was temporary, not permanent. The official Church had still the power to reform itself. When this happened, the separate congregation would return under its authority.[329] Congregationalists had in common with separatists the principle of the authority of the single congregation. The latter was a church in itself, with full sacramental powers. It did not need any warrant from a superior assembly to organise itself.[330] However, unlike separatists, congregationalists did not completely reject the concept of a national, centralised church. They only wanted to make the system looser, allowing some measure of autonomy to the individual congregation.[331]Another point of agreement with separatists, however, was in the voluntary character of membership of the community. In civil war Congregationalism this characteristic of free choice was particularly stressed. At the same time, joining a congregation meant making a commitment, which had to be kept by the member. It entailed duties towards the other members, and the community as a whole.[332] While individual freedom was very important, it was counterbalanced by a strong sense of fellowship, of the ties connecting the various members of the congregation to each other. Mutual solidarity was for Congregationalists an essential element of a church.[333]

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329 MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion,* pp. 26-27; Haller, *Rise*, p. 176.

330 G. Nuttall, *Visible Saints, The Congregational Way* 1640-1660 (Oxford 1957) pp. 9-10.

331 Liu, *Discord in Zion,* pp. 35, 37-38, Yule, *Independents,* pp. 11-12.

332 Nuttal, *Visible Saints,* pp. 107-110.

333 ibid, ch. II.

Another religious experience which developed within English Protestantism was that of non-separating Congregationalism. It consisted mainly of spontaneous forms of religious gatherings, not included in the discipline of the established church. They differed from a proper congregationalism in that they were carried out within the Church of England, in parallel with attendance at its services. The people in the parish gathered among themselves, privately, to practise religious exercises. They prayed, fasted, sang Psalms, meditated on the Scripture, repeated and commented on sermons they had listened to in the parish. All these were activities that could be carried out by lay people as well. Administration of sacraments, or other tasks reserved to the clergy, were not practised.[334]

Nevertheless, although their participants were not conscious of it, these activities implied a different idea of the church. They were collective, organised initiatives, but developing from below, from common churchgoers. They were not provided with any official warrant from ecclesiastical authorities. Through comments on the contents of sermons, or public expressions of prayer, the members of the conventicle experimented with an elementary form of lay preaching.[335] The puritan laity tended to subject the action of their ministers to their judgement, and to act accordingly. If they thought their pastor was not learned or godly enough, they deserted their parish and went to another. In more extreme cases, they simply gave up attending parish worship and joined a conventicle. Many of them were later called to appear before an ecclesiastical or secular court, where they generally justified their action on moral and religious grounds.[336] The experience of conventicles was

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334 S. Foster, *Notes from the Caroline Underground* (Hamden 1978) pp. 3-5, 6; W. Hunt, *The Puritan Moment* (Cambridge 1983) p. 94; Collison, *Godly People*, pp. 536-537.

335 Foster, *Notes,* pp. 3-4; Collinson, *Godly People,* pp. 8, 15, 537, 544-546.

336 Collinson, *Godly People,* pp. 9-10; M. Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford 1978) pp. 78-79.

important for the New Model Army. As we will see, its members too sometimes took part in it, forming lay congregations among themselves. Such an experience, in turn, was to prepare them to the self governed forms of political-religious gatherings in the movement.[337]

In proper Congregationalism the self determination of the assembly was reduced. In theory, a balance of power was achieved between the clerical and the lay component. The lay people were entitled not only to elect ministers, but to admit new members and to condemn transgressors or heretics. They were also allowed to discuss the everyday problems of the congregation. To the clergy were reserved all duties connected to worship. However, it was always the clergy who decided the subjects to be discussed by the assembly. Besides, although formally the debate was open, in case of controversy the ministers were left the final decision. While they were opposed to a concentration of all powers in the hands of ministers, Congregationalists opposed as much giving the same proportion of authority to everyone.[338]

Even concerning religious toleration, the Independents' openness was not unlimited. They accepted disagreements on particulars, minor issues, but not on what were called the fundamentals of faith. In practice they tolerated, to some extent, different forms of church discipline and worship, but never differences in doctrine or moral behaviour.[339] Moreover, the Independents totally excluded Catholicism, Anglicanism, and even the "radical fringes" of separatism. A ban on all these churches

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337 Cf. above, p. 68; and below, p. 281.

338 "An Apologetical Narration" in W. Haller, *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution* (New York 1934) II, p. 322. T. Goodwin, P. Nye, introduction to John Cotton's tract "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (1644) in Woodhouse, *Puritanism*, pp. 293-298; P. Miller, *The New England Mind* (New York 1939) I, pp. 451-452.

339 "An Apologetical Narration", in Haller, *Tracts*, pp. 317, 336-337; A. Zakai, "Religious Toleration and its Enemies: the Independent Divines and the Issue of Toleration in the English Civil War" *Albion* XXI (1989) p. 6; Shaw, *English Church, I*, p. 51; Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, pp. 109-110, 117.

was actually considered essential to achieve a right reformation. This has drawn some historians to argue that the toleration the Independents demanded concerned solely their way of running the church. It did not extend at all to other groups, even within Puritanism.[340]

This is to some extent true; however, it does not apply to all Independency. In fact, as George Yule observed, there were various shades of opinion among Independents. Besides the orthodox classical mainstream there were the radicals, closer to the sects. The radical Independents tended not to identify faith and godliness with specific forms of worship or even doctrine.[341] The authors of the "Apologetical Narration", again, maintained that they had never linked godliness in any body to the holding of specific religious opinions.[342] The *Independent Catechism*, issued in 1647, described truth as something which is understood by degrees, in a process of continual progress towards perfection. John Goodwin, an independent minister, supporter of the *Apologetical Narration*, and of the "Dissenting Brethren" in general, argued that what is at one time judged as an error, might be later discovered as a truth.[343] Other Congregationalists would later back him.[344]

This does not mean that Independents were relativists, sceptical about the existence of an absolute truth. On the contrary, they were convinced that it existed and was unalterable. However, since it was an

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340 "An Apologetical Narration", in Haller, *Tracts II,* p. 334; Zakai, "Religious Toleration", pp. 25, 28; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* pp. 117, 119; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie, p.24.*

341 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* p. 247; Yule, *Independents,* pp. 11, 17-18.

342 Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, p. 114.

343 BDBR II, p. 16; Woodhouse, *Puritanism,* p. 45 fn 2, pp. 46-47; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* p.246.

344 Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, p. 117.

infinite truth, human reason, being *finite* was unable to attain it whole and at once. Truth did make itself known by human reason. Only, it did this little by little, in a slow, difficult process, passing through various mistakes. However, in this process there was always a further progress in truth, an inner maturation. The only pre-condition was a willingness to change, to admit one's mistake and accept new contributions. To achieve this, not only personal meditation, but also confrontation with others in an open debate was very important. Everybody must regard himself as susceptible to be enlightened by others: not official religious authorities only, but "the meanest brother" as well, in the congregation and even outside it. Sidrach Simpson, one of the five Dissenting Brethren in the Westminster Assembly, believed that common churchgoers had the right to question their minister about his sermon. He had to accept their criticism.[345]

Debate did not necessarily bring discovery and agreement. Sometimes, even many times, it might conclude with the parties still dissenting from each other. However, mutual goodwill in trying to understand each other would in the end produce an agreement.[346] This attitude had to be followed not only by private parties, but by government itself, in matters concerning faith and conscience. This concept of common, free discussion as a way of overcoming problems and disagreements, reaching the truth together, was also to characterise the debates of the New Model army in 1647. At Putney, after three days of heated and conflicting debate, when a common ground seemed impossible to find, the final resolution ran thus: "that the Council be adjourned till to-morrow, and so from day to day till the proposals bee all

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345 K. Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Albershot 1997) p. 289.

346 Woodhouse, *Puritanism,* pp. 45-47; Liu, *Discord in Zion,* pp. 48-49; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* pp. 252-253.

debated". This seems to imply a willingness to go on with discussion in spite of all apparently irreconcilable positions, until some solution was finally found.[347]

The separatists, or sectarian groups, completed the process started by Congregationalism. They advocated total separation both from the main body of the church and from political power, and the abolition of any distinction of status among church members.

All Puritanism, to some extent, had recognised the supremacy of individual conscience. The latter, however, had to be instructed by the Bible, besides being guided by divine grace. Separatists tended to play down the role of Scripture, in favour of direct inspiration by God's spirit. Individual conscience thus became really self-sufficient, led only by an inner divine light.[348] Religious individualism, or complete individual freedom in matters of religion, was therefore one consequence of separatist beliefs. Another consequence, however, was a tendency to level human hierarchies, both cultural and social. If God was present in every believer, they all shared the same degree of dignity and authority. The level of education, just as social position, did not matter. Such a concept of equality was developed also in other directions. It ended up undermining any superior authority, even in a more private sphere. The subjection of children to their fathers, or of servants and apprentices to their masters, was open to questioning. The voice of the Spirit was the only authority to be followed. Therefore, if it enjoined a young boy (or even a girl) or a servant to leave everything and join a congregation, they were entitled to do it, regardless of their father's or master's opinion.[349]

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347 *C.P.* I, p. 406.

348 MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion*, pp. 57-59; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, pp. 13-14; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, pp. 291; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, p. 33.

349 Lindley, *Popular Politics*, pp. 299-300; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, pp. 35-36, 37.

Religious individualism and egalitarianism were at the basis of the extension of the power of preaching to lay believers, common among separatists. There was no restriction due to social position, degree of education and even sex. In many sectarian groups, women were allowed to preach as well as men. They might even be the leaders of a congregation. As regards men, those coming from the lower classes seem to have been the majority: cobblers, tinkers, coachmen, servants.[350]

Spontaneous religious meetings began to be kept in public places. Lay preachers and sectaries in general became bolder, even more aggressive, towards the proposed new religious authorities. Cases of religious services interrupted by lay-people, and of ordained ministers challenged in their pulpits, accused of preaching false doctrines, became more and more frequent. Parliament was forced to intervene at the end of 1646, issuing an ordinance for the prosecution of people who disturbed religious services.[351]

Both ministers and people had to face the challenge of unauthorised lay preachers. The latter asked that their opinions should be tested, that all the pros and cons of their position should be examined, and judgement given. They were confident that they would be able to demonstrate the validity of their point of view to anybody, including learned divines. This phenomenon involved not only London, but also neighbouring counties and even more distant places, such as Newcastle or Guernsey.[352]

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350 Lindley, *Popular Politics*, pp. 287-289; Haller, *Rise*, pp.261-264; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, pp. 35, 42; C. Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London 1964) p. 67; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, pp. 36-37.

351 *Perfect Diurnall* N° 178 (21-28 December 1646) BL, E 513 (30), p. 1424; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie, p. 34.*

352 T. Edwards, *Gangraena,* I (1646) pp. 50-53, 106, 108. Corporation of London Record Office, Journal of the Common Council of London, vol. XL, fo. 160, 178, 180 (May 1646); *L.J.* VI, p. 447 (March 2, 1644); *L.J.* VII, p. 43 (October 23, 1644) p. 44, (November 1, 1644); *L.J.* VIII, p. 105 (January 16, 1646) p. 332 (March 26, 1646) p. 445 (July 24, 1646); *C.J.* III, p. 633 (September 19, 1644); *C.J.* IV, p. 407 (January 15,

Not all lay preachers, however, were so defiant and self-assured in their attitude towards more conformist puritans. Some considered themselves not as teachers, but as disciples of Christ spreading the Gospel. They did not feel themselves entitled to preach in an assertive way, presenting their opinions as the Truth. They rather wanted to discuss things together, to consult with other people, searching for the truth with their help.[353]

Concerning intolerance of internal dissent, this certainly characterised separatist groups too. Some of them, notably the Baptists, followed Presbyterians in subjecting all members of the congregation to a continuous strict control by the elders. Such a control did not concern their religious tenets only, but their private life as well.[354] However, while they did not accept dissenters within the community, separatists never tried to compel their members to publicly acknowledge their opinions as an error, and embrace the beliefs of the community. Expulsion, and suspension from communion sometimes, were their only disciplinary measures. Moreover, a congregation was not a state organisation. Membership was not compulsory. People joined the congregation because they had decided to do so. If they had chosen that given community, it was supposed that they shared at least its basic principles.

The internal organisation of the sect, then, was far more democratic than the Presbyterian and the Independent models. The former, as we have seen, recognised a supremacy of the clergy over lay

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1646). On interruptions of religious services by protesters cf. *L.J.* VIII, p. 621, (December 22, 1646); p. 624 (December 23, 1646); *C.J.* IV, pp. 526-527 (April 29, 1646); A Macfarlane (ed) *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (Oxford 1991) p. 34 (February 20, 1645) p. 71 (September 27, 1646).

353 Edwards, *Gangraena,* I par. 130, p. 31; Macfarlane, *Diary of Ralph Josselin,* p. 63 (June 29, 1646); MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion,* p. 30.

354 MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion,* p.45.

believers. The Independents allowed more freedom to the laity, but only to some extent. In separatist communities, the distinction between the two orders tended to disappear. Among the Baptists, preaching and the control of discipline – the only clerical functions in that sect – were temporarily entrusted to lay members, who at the same time worked to support themselves. The Scottish Presbyterian Robert Baillie reported in 1643 that in Brownist – or separatist – congregations ministers might be removed by the flock if the majority did not approve of their proceedings.[355]

In spite of their doctrinal intolerance, all separatists allowed a wide freedom of discussion within the congregation. Among Presbyterians, the minister taught from the pulpit and church–goers could do nothing but listen to him. Congregationalists, as we have seen, allowed some discussion, but leaving to the minister the last word.[356] In separatist groups, the sermon was always followed, or even accompanied, by a debate among all members, men and women, clerical as well as lay, on an equal level. Sometimes, discussion was continued dividing the assembly into smaller groups, to make the participation of every member easier.

With the outbreak of the civil war, such a freedom of discussion widened, tending to include even the more strictly organised sects, such as the Baptists. Edwards reported Baptist meetings characterised by endless, even exhausting discussions, in which it was not possible to find agreement or compromise among the opposed points of view. The preacher was just one speaker among many: therefore anybody could intervene to express their agreement or disagreement with what he was saying. The role of preacher was not permanent. At every meeting, the

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355 MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion,* p. 40; Woodhouse, *Puritanism,* p. 75; Hill, *World Turned Upside Down,* p. 150.

356 Cf. above, p. 110.

congregation voted on who would give the sermon on that day. Some meetings were open to strangers as well, who could intervene both in the election of the preacher, and in the debate.[357]

These meetings characterised by a totally free, informal, unfettered discussion among people who had lost all distinctions of ranks, were very much reminiscent of the New Model's debates. Separatist groups adopted political proceedings, such as voting, in their religious meetings. The army, conversely, was to include prayer and religious meditation as a way to help political debate. Several army activists, as we have seen, had been members of separatist congregations; and, as we will see, had sometimes formed conventicles among themselves, or mixed congregations with civilians. In those meetings, officers and soldiers could find themselves together, all members of the congregation on an equal level. This could help to explain the self assurance of some agitators while speaking to the commanders in the General Council. The New Model, besides, would face at Putney the same problems already met by the sects, the extreme difficulty of reaching an agreement based only on spontaneous consent.[358] Therefore, of all the varieties of Puritanism, separatism seems to have provided the closest model for the army movement, concerning both organisation and debate.

The Political Context. On the parliamentarian side, three main actors were involved in the struggle against the king: the Houses

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357 Hill, *Society and Puritanism,* p. 65; Haller, *Rise,* pp. 179-180; MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion,* p. 30; Edwards, *Gangraena,* I, pp. 93, 94; Lindley, *Popular Politics,* p. 289; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie, p. 35.*

358 See *CP,* I p. 252 (Capt Awdeley's speech) pp. 258-259 (Lieut-General's speech) p. 265 (Capt Awdeley again) p. 331 (Capt Awdeley again) p. 335 (Col Rainsborow's speech) p. 338 (Lieut Chillenden's speech) p. 339 (Sir Hardresse Waller's speech).

themselves; part of the population, especially in London; and intellectuals. My purpose, in this chapter, is to analyse the influence each of them was likely to play in the process of politicisation of the New Model army.

I will first examine the autonomous activism and capacity of self-organization shown by the people in 1640-1641. This set the example for the later proceedings of the army movement, and many army members may have been personally involved in it. The link between popular activism in 1640-1642 and the army's political commitment in 1647 is particularly evident in the case of apprentices. The latter played a relevant role in the campaign of petitions and demonstrations in London in 1640-1642. They often manifested very clear political and religious positions. At the same time, they gave one of the strongest contribution to the war effort, enlisting en masse (there were thousands of them) from the summer of 1642.[359] They often did so against the advice of their masters, as other members of the lower classes did in rural areas, against the choice of their landlords. The presence and consistency of apprentices in the army movement is documented by its early petitions. One of the requests presented to Parliament in May and June was that the period spent by apprentices in the army would be counted as spent in apprenticeship.[360] Moreover, two leading officers in the movement were involved in forms of political activism on the eve of the civil war. Colonel William Goffe, in June 1642 had supported Parliament's request to control the Militia and for this had been arrested. Lieutenant Edmund Chillenden, in 1637-1638 collaborated with John Lilburne in the

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359 Lindley. *Popular Politics,* pp. 226-228, 408-409; D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion* (Oxford 1985) p. 173.

360 Clarke MSS vol. 41, fo 109 bis, par. 18; fo 112 bis, par. 12; "Aggrievances of...Colonel Riches Regiment" in *Divers Papers from the Army,* pp. 9-10; *A Perfect and True Copy,* par. 8; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N. 213 (June 8-15, 1647) BL, E392 (24) p.558.

distribution of illegal pamphlets, especially against the bishops.[361] Of course this evidence is limited, but it still suggests that the political activism of 1640-1642 and before did have some influence in the politicization of the future members of the New Model.

Then, I will analyse Parliament's public declarations on the eve of the civil war. The latter stated principles and tackled issues that would later be taken up by the New Model in its manifestoes. Moreover, the army was often to remind Parliament of its declarations, to reproach it for the inconsistency of its later actions with its own stated principles[362]. Finally, I will consider the political literature of the civil war. I will especially focus on the theory of the right of resistance, and the connected natural right of self-preservation. The army movement, in fact, would sometimes make use of these concepts to justify its own protest. However, I will also pay attention to other theories which, in one way or another, attributed importance to the right of the subject.

From the beginning of 1640, many ordinary people began to be politically very active, after a decade of silence and passivity during the Personal Rule. They framed and presented petitions, organized huge demonstrations (often combining the two) for or against a given political initiative. Helped by the collapse of censorship, they were able to circulate illegal pamphlets.

The people voiced their dissent first of all through petitions. In itself, the habit of petitioning authority about one's grievances was not new. It was a long – established way for subjects to communicate with their governors, recognized by the Common law. The law recognised two types: petitions of grace and petitions of right. The first requested a benefit which was part of the king's prerogative, and which therefore he

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361 BDBR, II, p. 12; I, p. 143.

362 Cf. above, pp. 14-15.

might or might not grant. In the second case, the request concerned a benefit which the law recognized as the subject's due, belonging to him. Therefore, the king was in a sense bound to grant it.[363]

However, the distinction was purely theoretical. In practice, since the authority of the king was indisputable, he was always free to accept or reject any request. This is why all types of petitions were written in the same submissive tone, introduced by expressions like "We humbly beseech", "We supplicate", "If it pleases your Lordship" etc. They always seemed to imply that being listened to by the king would be for the petitioner a favour, not a right. Moreover, petitions were not so much a political as a legal instrument. It was a way to get redress for wrongs inflicted by other subjects, in the family, at work, with neighbours etc. In all these cases, the sovereign, later the Parliament, was called upon both as an arbiter in the dispute and as the supreme authority, who could enforce the law. Even during the civil war, there are several examples of this type of petition.[364]

Yet from 1640 a different kind of petition began to appear. It usually kept the same humble way of addressing, but it was much more assertive in substance. It no longer requested favours from the government, but demanded intervention which was due by principles of justice. Sometimes, especially towards the end of the war, the very authority addressed was questioned in its proceedings (we have already seen the example of the early Leveller petitions). Or the petitioners were bold enough to indicate what course was to be taken to achieve a given objective. This, for example, is the character of several petitions sent to Parliament during the first months of the war, by London citizens. All openly expressed their opposition to a compromise agreement with the king, seen as a move which would advantage him only. They asked for a

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363 M.Judson, *The Crisis of the Constitution* (New Brunswick 1949) p. 59.

364 Cf. *CSPD, C.J.* and *L.J.* for the period 1641-1646.

more effective continuation of the war, and presented a number of proposals to achieve this objective (increasing military forces, raising funds through subscriptions to pay troops etc). In this case the citizens implicitly took upon themselves the task of cooperating with Parliament in the management of the war. Parliament, being at that time in an extremely critical situation, received these proposals and directions favourably, instead of considering them a breach of its privileges.[365]

The petitions from 1640 had a more marked political character. Moreover, they involved organized groups rather than individuals, and a democratic system of discussion within them. The framing of the petition followed three main phases. First there were more or less informal meetings, usually among the gentry, who then established contacts with their constituents about the petition. Finally, there was the campaign to collect subscriptions. It is true that petitions were often the result of the efforts of tiny groups within the gentry, and of their connections with influential Parliament members. Sometimes, subscriptions were obtained in hasty ways. In the parish, the minister read the petition before the congregation. If from the crowd came expressions of assent, he drew up a list of the people present and attached their names to the petition. Some ministers contacted only educated and well-to-do parishioners, leaving the others aside. In one case, that of Yorkshire, the petition framed by a few leaders of the gentry was sent to Parliament without being previously circulated for subscriptions.[366]

However, such cases were not frequent. Much more often there was an attempt to assess the real degree of consent that the petition might obtain at a local level. The contents of the petition were publicly discussed, using as meeting – places inns, taverns and city-shops; or more official venues, such as quarter sessions, assizes or the grand – jury.

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365 Lindley, *Popular Politics,* pp. 305-306.

366 Fletcher, *Outbreak,* pp. 193-195.

These were a sort of provincial Parliaments where the local people, at least the gentry, could voice their opinions. Members of the grand jury and justices of peace played an important role in these cases. Their signatures always opened the list and it was usually they who brought the petition to Parliament. However, as they often pointed out, it was the assembly of the county (or city) people who appointed them, and decided to accept or reject the petition proposed to them.[367] After the parliamentary defeat at Leicester, for example, a group of London citizens autonomously took the initiative to meet to discuss the situation and devise solutions. The future Leveller leader, John Lilburne, was among them. The group so formed appointed a smaller committee (16 people out of two or three hundred) to frame a petition with proposals to overcome the crisis. The petition, however, would have later to be submitted to the whole assembly, to be examined and discussed. Moreover, the meeting of the committee had been preceded by a debate in the assembly, which probably had already provided some basic points to start from.[368]

Some counties chose one of their representatives in the Commons, or an influential member of the local gentry, to present their petition in Parliament. More often, however, the inhabitants themselves went en masse to London, to testify actively and publicly their desire to be heard. The petition of Kent was presented by a crowd of seven to ten thousand people. Other counties sent from one to three thousand of their inhabitants. The delivery of a petition in favour of the recent parliamentary reforms, at the end of November 1641, was preceded by two days of mass demonstrations. Finally the petitions, although

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367 Fletcher, *Outbreak,* pp. 192-194; Hunt, *Puritan Moment,* p. 204; Morrill, *Nature,* p. 46; V. Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford 1961) pp. 233-234.

368 J. Lilburne, *Innocency and the Truth Justified* N°1 (1646) BL, E 314 (21) pp. 4-6.

officially addressed to Parliament, were also a means of communication between the local community and the rest of the country. Most petitions were printed, in form of broadsheet or pamphlet, according to their length. In this way local initiatives became known at a national level.[369]

Thirty-eight out of the forty counties of England and some Welsh counties sent petitions to the Houses. Twenty-two counties addressed separate petitions to the Lords and the Commons. Some counties sent more than one petition, representing a different point of view at a later stage. Sometimes even districts within a county sent their own petitions. The only two areas left out, Cumberland and Gloucestershire, addressed the king directly, making requests that would be difficult for him to accept. Several towns also sent petitions. Many others planned to send them, but were not able to for lack of adequate organization.

The number of subscriptions for some of these documents is impressive: thirty thousand for Essex, fourteen for Suffolk, ten for Surrey and Shropshire. For other counties the number is reduced to a few thousands. Yet for the county of Rutland, for example, the 560 signatures are a very good result, considering the small number of inhabitants.[370]

All these petitions were essentially concerned with religious – ecclesiastical matters, and did not generally tackle directly political issues. However, the petitions on the reform of the church sometimes contained explicit references to political issues. The petitioners were against monopolies, imposition of taxes without parliamentary consent, arbitrary courts like the Star Chamber and the High Commission. They demanded respect for individual liberty and property. The reference to inalienable "native" rights belonging to the subjects as an "undoubted inheritance" recurred on several occasions.[371] The petitioners never

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369 Fletcher, *Outbreak,* pp. 171, 196-198.

370 ibid, pp. 111, 122, 191-192, 195.

371 ibid, pp. 199, 222.

questioned the authority of the king. They professed allegiance to him as much as to Parliament. However, they attributed to the latter much greater decisional powers than either the king or the constitution would allow. In so doing, they challenged the king's authority "de facto".[372]

Other petitions tackled economic problems, such as the stagnation of trade or the devaluation of currency, and criticised monopolies. Even in these cases, however, the religious element had some weight. The economic crisis was seen as one consequence of the spread of popery.[373]

Sometimes, democracy and representation were the issues at stake. In February 1642, the watermen of the river Thames addressed a petition to the Court of Aldermen. They asked that the officers of the livery companies be elected by the rank and file, and renewed yearly. As usual, they appealed to tradition. They claimed that such a practice was sanctioned by two royal charters going back to the middle ages. However, the actual novelty of the request was underlined by the aldermen, in their reply. In fact, the legal tradition provided that the officers would be appointed by them and the mayor. Besides, they had to be "the most wise, discreet and the best sort". Not everybody could be elected. The watermen were allowed to present to the court of aldermen a list of names, from whom the latter would choose the officers. However, the list was not binding. The aldermen could choose someone else.[374] The very fact that such a request was made seems to indicate a new political mood.

The people had other ways, beside petitions, to intervene in political affairs. They assembled before Westminster and made themselves heard on matters debated in Parliament. Many petitions, as

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372 ibid, pp. 226-227; Morrill, *Nature,* p. 67.

373 Lindley, *Popular Politics,* p. 10, 398.

374 CLRO, Repertories, Vol. 55, fo 373-374.

we have seen, were presented by a multitude of people. Sometimes these demonstrations degenerated into riots, in which guards were attacked, prisoners liberated, and acts of vandalism were committed. Demonstrations and riots occurred frequently between the end of 1640 and the outbreak of the civil war. The delivery of the Root and Branch Petition, as we have seen, was accompanied by a huge crowd. The same happened a year later. On 29 and 30 November 1641 mass demonstrations were organized in support of the recent parliamentary reforms. On that occasion a petition in favour of Parliament was circulated among the crowd, and obtained 15 thousand signatures. Other protests were organized at the end of December 1641, aimed at the bishops, who were denied entry to the Lords by the crowd. Squads of soldiers were sent to disperse them, but the demonstrators attacked them. In the same days, a crowd gathered at Westminster Abbey, where bishop Williams had imprisoned some apprentices for interrogation. The multitude tried to liberate them, and managed to break down one of the gates before being dispersed.

Besides bishops, a frequent target of popular protest at the end of 1641 was the House of Lords. Sometimes, even the king came under attack. On 5 January 1642, after the failed attempt to arrest the five members, the king went to the City to meet the Common Council. When he arrived, he found a large crowd that welcomed him shouting "privilege of Parliament!". According to a witness, thousands of people took part in the demonstration. Later on, hearing that the king wanted to take away as prisoners the five members, many people, both men and women, rushed armed into the streets, ready to liberate them.[375] This relatively mass activism involved all orders of society: merchants, traders and financiers, but also artisans, apprentices and porters. We have

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375 Fletcher, *Outbreak,* pp. 171-172, 175, 182.

already seen the role of apprentices.[376] Women too, especially in the lower classes, often took the initiative, participating in demonstrations and signing petitions.[377] Even the Clubmen rising, inspired by localist and neutralist feelings, offers examples of popular self-determination and even some rough forms of participatory democracy. It was the mass of the parish people assembled who elected some among themselves to organise their struggle.[378]

As we have seen, demonstrators on various occasions resorted to violence. Generally, however, they gave proof of self – control and organization. They carefully planned the forms of protest, pointed at well determined objectives and tended to avoid indiscriminate forms of violence. Even the demolition of sacred objects was generally carried out in an orderly way, removing the "superstitious" elements without ruining the buildings as a whole.[379]

Some historians have argued that the popular unrest between 1640 and 1642 was provoked, or at least manipulated, by parliamentary leaders. However, according to some contemporaries, like Richard Baxter, it was the pressure of the crowd which pushed the Houses to take a number of steps. Probably both hypotheses have an element of truth. Radical groups among the population and in Parliament influenced and reinforced each other. The Commons, unlike the Lords, showed their approval and sometimes even encouraged popular demonstrations. Contrary to what would happen later, they tended to accept with favour any petition addressed to them, provided it supported their viewpoint. In

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376 Cf. above, p. 118.

377 Lindley, *Popular Politics,* pp. 351-353, 407-409; Fletcher, *Outbreak,* pp. 173-174. On the role of women, see also Rushworth, *Historical Collections,* V, pp. 356-358.

378 Underdown, *Revel,* p. 158.

379 Lindley, *Popular Politics,* pp. 410-411.

the Grand Remonstrance, the right to petition authorities was solemnly claimed as a fundamental right of the subject. The mass of demonstrators was seen as a possible ally against the king, and a House of Lords which seemed too close to the king. On some occasions, parliamentary leaders used agents to get in contact and act in concert with radical groups in London.

At times, however, even the Commons felt the need to restrain in some way the activism of the multitude. They began to appeal to it to act in a more peaceable and orderly way; but on some occasions, it was popular pressure which forced decisions on a reluctant House. The religious reforms were undertaken by Parliament very slowly, only after a mass of petitions had poured in from all over the country.[380] Popular presence, sometimes threatening, prevented or discouraged bishops and conservative MP[s] from attending parliamentary sessions. It also persuaded other members, and even the king, to opt for the solutions indicated by the crowd. This is certainly the case for Strafford's attainder, the exclusion of bishops from the House of Lords and the Lords' approbation of the Militia Ordinance. Finally, popular activism contributed much to the creation of the royalist party.

Even the parliamentary leaders who used the crowd could become wary of the tendency of common people to intervene in affairs of the state. The huge crowd accompanying the Root and Branch Petition raised suspicions and even resentments among the majority in Parliament. The Houses, in their official answer to the petitioners, warned them, among other things, not to assemble any more at Westminster in that way. At the same time, other MP[s] or state officials openly sympathized with the crowd. While they usually tended to emphasize the high social origins of

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380 Cf. above, p. 123.

petitioners, sometimes they showed solidarity with the intervention of the lower orders.[381]

In conclusion, while popular activism in some respects was manipulated, the common people also showed an autonomous capacity of mobilization and organization.

The Long Parliament set a powerful example of challenging recognized authorities, even before the outbreak of the civil war. Between 1640 and 1642 it took the initiative more and more, without or even against the consent of the king. It questioned many of the prerogatives always attributed to him, taking steps to put his actions under its control.[382] The example was the more striking because it came from a body which was itself an established authority, traditionally seen as cooperating with the king.

In taking away the sovereignty from the king and claiming it for itself, Parliament appealed to the people. The need to oppose a sovereign whose prerogatives were recognised by the constitution drove its members to resort to other arguments. Besides the constitution and the common positive law, a point of reference for Parliament became more and more the law of nature, that complex of fundamental principles that all men could equally understand by their reason. This law did not necessarily coincide with the positive law of a single state: it came before and was above it. Therefore, it could justify even significant alterations. In fostering this principle, Parliament gave a first example of a challenge

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381 Fletcher, *Outbreak,* pp. 15, 111; Hunt, *Puritan Moment,* p. 289; Lindley, *Popular Politics,* pp. 15-17, 176, 410-412; B. Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution* (London 1976) pp. 7, 15-18; Pearl, *London*, pp. 210-228.

382 D.L. Smith, "The Impact on Government" in J. Morrill (ed) *The Impact of the English Civil War* (London 1991) pp. 34-35, 40-41; P. Zagorin, *The Court and the Country* (London 1969) pp. 217-226.; J. Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*": *The Philosophical Basis of the English Civil War* (Manchester 1989) p. 36.

towards the existing political order.[383] Parliament was the first to claim a right, inherent in the condition of man as a reasonable being, to provide for his welfare and preserve himself by any means necessary. This included active resistance to established authority, if the latter proved harmful to those who were subjected to it. In a tract included in the Book of Parliamentary Declarations, there again recurred the metaphor of the general turning his cannon against his soldiers, as a justification for their resistance.[384] It is true that, on some occasions, Parliament advocated such a right for itself only. It warned that, if the mass of the people took the initiative by themselves, chaos would ensue. The right way to provide for one's own defence was to entrust it to a restricted number of capable persons; that is to say Parliament.[385] Elsewhere, however, as we have seen, they claimed this right in more general terms, which could be applicable to the common people as well.

The rights of the subjects were given due space in the first two parliamentary manifestoes: the Protestation (May 1641) and the Grand Remonstrance. The main accusation against the popish party around the king was that it had fomented divisions between him and his subjects, setting the crown against the people. The request to abolish extra-parliamentary taxation was justified with the principle that subjects could not be taxed without their consent, through their representatives. The confiscation of lands by the king was condemned as a violation of a basic "men's right". Moreover, Parliament showed its concern to protect the citizens from arbitrary proceedings, and to guarantee them some economic welfare. Finally, the last request to the king, in the

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383 Sharp, "John Lilburne", pp. 25, 27-28, 30, 34.

384 "A Question answered: How Laws are to be understood, and obedience yielded", in *EC,* pp. 150-151; "A Proposition or Message, Sent the 31 of December to His Majestie, by the House of Commons for a Guard", in *EC,* p. 44; Sharp, "John Lilburne", pp. 29,39.

385 "The Declaration or Remonstrance", *EC,* pp. 207-208.

Remonstrance, was that all his officials should take an oath to "observe the laws which concern the subject in his liberty".[386] The vindication of the rights of the subjects would recur in several other parliamentary declarations. Not being arrested without a warrant and a cause shown; having a fair trial by one's peers in a short time; being free to petition authorities about one's grievances: all these rights were claimed by the Houses on behalf of the people.[387] Both the right to petition and that of guarantees in the legal sphere would be recurring themes in the New Model political literature.[388]

The defence of the subjects' basic liberties was one of the reasons given for the war against the king's party; sometimes a relevant one. In a parliamentary declaration, these liberties were defined a "birthright" of the people: something which belonged to them inherently, not because the state had decided to grant it to them.[389] Parliament questioned for the first time the tradition which saw the king's prerogatives and the subjects' rights as complementary. On the contrary, the former might sometimes prove dangerous or harmful for the latter. The king claimed he had a right to his forts and towns, in the same way as his subjects were entitled to their homes. Parliament, however, pointed out that the

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386 "The Grand Remonstrance", in Gardiner, *Documents,* p. 207; par. 26, 120, 202; "The Protestation", ibid, pp. 155-156.

387 "The Humble Petition of the Lords and Commons now assembled in Parliament" (January 29, 1642) *EC,* pp. 66-67; "The Declaration, Votes and Order of assistance of both Houses of Parliament, Concerning the Magazin at Hull" (April 1642) *EC,* p. 161; "The Declaration or Remonstrance", *EC,* p. 201; "Third Remonstrance", *EC,* pp. 277-278; "The Humble Petition of the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled" (June 1642) *EC,* p. 359.

388 Cf above, pp. 18-20.

389 "Third Remonstrance", *EC,* p. 273; "Propositions and Orders by the Lords and Commons in Parliament" (June 10, 1642) *EC,* p. 340; "A Declaration of … Parliament, for the preservation of the kingdom, and the Town of Hull"; *EC,* pp. 458-459; " A Declaration of the Lords and Commons concerning a paper directed … to the Lord Major and Sheriffs of London" (June 21, 1645) *EC,* p. 377.

exchange was unequal. If the king owned a whole town, he was automatically proprietor of all the houses and goods that it contained as well; even though in principle they belonged to the people.[390]

At the same time, Parliament tended to identify the rights and interests of the people with its own. On some occasions at least, the distinction between representatives and represented, and the superiority of the institution to the multitude tended to disappear. Parliament was a channel through which the people could make themselves heard. This, in turn, was their unalienable right, because what was transacted in Parliament *concerned them,* affected their life.[391] Parliament members shared with the people represented the condition of subjects. Therefore the interest of the people was also theirs. Moreover, Parliament was a body chosen by the people, and its very function was to guarantee their liberties.[392]

But Parliament did more than this. It justified a direct, active participation of the multitude in the discussion of common affairs. To counteract the royalist disparagement of popular activism, Parliament argued for its lawfulness. It pointed out that the number of people involved in a meeting or other initiative was not in itself a sign of illegality or bad intentions. Moreover, it claimed for the people a right to make their presence felt in Parliament, where matters that concerned them were daily discussed.[393] Parliament even defended a right of the people, on some occasions, not to obey orders from established authorities. It argued that an unjust or harmful action could not be lawfully ordered. Even if such an order was given, those who received it

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390 "Third Remonstrance", *EC,* pp. 266-267.

391 "The Petition…by the Earle of Stamford", *EC,* p. 141.

392 "The Third Remonstrance", *EC,* pp. 263-264.

393 "The Declaration or Remonstrance", *EC,* pp. 201-202, 209.

were free from any obligation to obey it: indeed they were morally bound to refuse to obey it. An order like this would be made null by its very iniquity, even if it was the king himself who gave it.[394]

In July 1642, Parliament publicly declared legally void the king's proclamation to raise an army. On that occasion, it also authorized all subjects not only to refuse the draft, but to resist any attempt to arrest them. Parliament therefore set a precedent of officially sanctioned disobedience and resistance. Later, other dissenters from governmental action, even though carried out by the Houses, would be given a justification for their refusal to comply.[395]

However, Parliament did not always play this role of supporter of an autonomous power of the people. It was also keenly aware of its specific privileges, its institutional position. On the eve of the civil war, when it needed support against the king, Parliament had encouraged, or at least favourably accepted popular initiatives (petitions, demonstrations etc). As the war went on, however, its members became more and more hostile towards initiatives from below. Petitions containing requests not in accordance with Parliament's aims were rejected. The authors were reproached for presuming to teach their representatives what they had to do.[396] Moreover, during the war Parliament gave increasing examples of arbitrary action. It tended to adopt more and more emergency measures which infringed ordinary law. While all state officials had to swear obedience to the Petition of Right, the latter was actually violated in fundamental clauses by parliamentary bills. Both local and national committees were given power to impose billeting of troops in civilians'

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394 ibid, p. 201.

395 "A Declaration by...Parliament, declaring that none shall apprehend any of his Majesties subjects...under pretence of his Majesties Warrant" (July 12, 1642) *EC*, p. 458.

396 Morgan, *Inventing the People,* p. 65; D. Hirst, *The Representative of the People?* (Cambridge 1975) p. 185.

houses, besides impressment. They could seize the goods of citizens and imprison without formal charge or trial those who resisted them. Convicted citizens were required to answer questions incriminating for themselves, contrary to the declarations of the Grand Remonstrance. Therefore, the accusation of acting arbitrarily, against the constitution, that Parliament had made to the king, after the end of the war began to be turned against Parliament.[397]

Parliament's declarations in the civil war had provided a theoretical justification of the people's autonomous action, and fostered their rights. Now Parliament's critics, from the Levellers to the New Model Army, would call Parliament to account for the non – application of its very principles.[398]

Pamphleteers provided the philosophical grounds to justify fighting against the king. In so doing, they questioned a number of traditional common assumptions about the nature and ends of government. At the same time, however, they were enabled to do it by some other principles, also belonging to the English political tradition.

The first, basic one was given by the concept of Common law and the connected theory of "the right of the subject". The Common law consisted of the complex of rules always followed, by custom, in the English state. It preserved the rights of both rulers and subjects. It sanctioned the authority of the king; but, at the same time, the equally inalienable "privileges of Parliament" and the "liberties and properties" of the subjects. This meant that even the power of the king, in spite of his "divine right", was really limited. It coexisted with a sphere of rights

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397 Hirst, *Representative,* p. 188; Smith, "Impact on Government", in Morrill , *Impact,* p. 40; Morrill, *Revolt;* p. 52, 64-66; R. Ashton, "From Cavalier to Roundhead Tyranny", in Morrill, *Reactions,* pp. 185-190.

398 Sharp, "John Lilburne", esp pp. 19-21.

belonging to other entities, and had to adjust itself not to invade them.[399] Certainly the authority of the king limited the sphere of the subjects' liberties. However, the reverse was also true. The sovereign and the people were seen as two parties, two autonomous powers tempering each other.[400] The Common law also enabled the subjects to claim their rights in a court of Justice in case they were infringed, even against the king.[401] As we have seen, the concept of "the right of the subject" was also at the basis of the political thought of the army movement, although the latter would give it an exclusive value, above those of king and Parliament.[402]

However, the political theories drawn up by parliamentarians during the civil war also marked a clear departure from tradition. They developed two main principles which were alien to the political thought of early Stuart England: the subordination of government to popular consent and the right to resist an unjust power. The latter was a consequence of the former. In both cases, what was aimed at was to circumscribe the power of the sovereign, avoiding the risk that the will of an individual could impose itself on that of the whole collectivity.

Parliament's followers did not advocate an active right to resist the sovereign, to keep him in power or depose him according to the people's will. The resistance they justified was purely defensive, and to be resorted to only in emergency, when one's survival was at stake. However, bolder developments were possible, starting from this limited premise. The right to resist to defend oneself could not be justified by an

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399 A. Sharp, *Political Ideas of the English Civil War, 1642-1649* (London 1983) p. 7; Judson, *Crisis,* pp. 34-35, fn 66 p. 34.

400 J.W. Gough, *Fundamental Law in English Constitutional History* (Oxford 1955) pp. 70-74; Sharp, *Political Ideas,* p. 8; Judson, *Crisis,* pp. 37-38, 44.

401 Judson, *Crisis,* pp.47-49; Sharp, *Political Ideas,* pp. 7-9; C. Russell, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642* (London 1990) p. 42.

402 Cf. above, pp. 15-18.

appeal to the constitution, to the tradition of the land, though interpreting it with emphasis on the right of the subjects. It was a law decreed by God for all nature. It had been wrought by God in the heart of every man so that anybody, by their reason, could equally understand it. In this interpretation, resistance and not only obedience had a divine sanction.[403]

The right and power to preserve oneself, by any means necessary, belonged therefore to any individual, of whatever rank and order. It belonged to subordinates as well as superiors, and it entitled the former to resist the latter. Henry Parker likened the position of the subjects under a tyrannical ruler to that of soldiers threatened by their general with a cannon; and mariners threatened by their pilot to be run against the rocks. In both cases, subordinates were justified in trying to stop their superiors.[404] Moreover, the right to self-defence did not concern only mere survival. It also included one's safety and welfare in a wider sense: the respect of one's dignity, physical and mental soundness; even, to some extent, one's goods. It was a right to self-determination as much as self-defence.[405]

This point is particularly significant in relation to its development in the political thought of the New Model Army. The latter was to justify its protest action by the right of any individual to preserve himself, to ensure both his survival and at least his basic welfare. Such a right was to be claimed as inherent to the nature of human being, and therefore granted by God (who has endowed men with this nature). The New Model, however, would no longer make use of this argument against the

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403 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* p. 77; Sanderson, *"But the People's Creatures",* p. 15.

404 Parker, "Observations", in Haller, *Tracts,* II, p. 170.

405 Sharp, *Political Ideas,* pp. 69-71, 138; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures",* pp. 15-16, 21.

king, who after his defeat was unable to impose obedience anyway, but against Parliament itself.[406]

The principle of self-defence implied a different concept of the respective roles of governors and governed. Parliamentarians agreed with royalists that political authority had been established by God. For the former, however, it passed through the intermediation of the people. It was the latter who decided the way in which they were to be governed, and the person or persons to be entrusted with government. While political authority had been instituted by God, its subordination to the consent of the people in the way in which it was exercised was also a result of God's will. At the same time, the human source of political power was not the sovereign, but the multitude.[407] As a consequence, both power and the connected duty of obedience were no more absolute. Authority was not legitimate in itself. It depended on how it was used. Even a legitimate authority might be ill used by the particular individual who exercised it. In that case, subjects were free to take away from him the power they had conferred. Subjects, in this interpretation, no longer had a merely passive role. Even in obeying, they exercised their capacity of judgement, of discrimination between right and wrong, and freedom of action in removing their rulers.[408]

The army movement seems to have been much influenced by this concept, as it appears by both its theoretical statements and its action. In the Declaration of June 14, this argument is implied in the metaphor of

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406 "A Declaration" in Haller & Davies, p. 55; *A Vindication of the Army,* par. 6; "A Letter of the Agitators of the Horse to the Horse in the North", CP I, p. 90; "The Humble Petition of the Souldiers of your Excellencies Army" in *Two Letters of Sir T. Fairfax...*; "Honest Seamen of England" in Wolfe, *Manifestoes, p. 151-152.*

407 C. C. Weston, J. Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns* (Cambridge 1981) p. 2; E.S. Morgan, *Inventing the People* (New York 1988) p. 56; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* pp. 74, 78; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", pp. 16-18.

408 Sharp, *Political Ideas,* pp. 17-18; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* pp. 73-74.

the soldiers who are entitled to stop their general if he threatens them with a cannon. In this case the subordinates have taken to themselves to judge the behaviour of their commander wrong, and divest him of his power. The action of the New Model soldiery between May and June 1647 was inspired by the same principle. As we have seen, they often defied the authority of their officers, calling meetings and boycotting the Irish service against their orders; and finally removing them from their posts. They justified their action blaming their officers for withstanding their "just proceedings". They, too, were claiming a right to weigh the lawfulness of the action of their superiors and eventually depose them. In the *Vindication* of June 15, the movement explicitly stated that the final judgement on the orders of rulers belonged to "they who are to obey them".[409]

Henry Parker reminded his readers of the old medieval maxim: "what concerns all, must be approved, or transacted by all". He emphasised that it was on the basis of this principle that Parliaments were created. They were conceived as a means through which the whole collectivity could have a voice in the affairs that affected its life.[410] As we have seen, the New Model acted on this principle in setting up its representative structures. Besides, it referred to the same principle when debating its constitutional proposals.[411]

However, in referring to the people, parliamentary writers were somewhat ambiguous. They often did not mean the people as such, the undifferentiated mass of the subjects. They referred to Parliament, which was the people's representative. Parliament represented all the subjects, but it had not been originally established by them. In the beginning,

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409 "A Declaration",, in Haller & Davies, pp. 55-56; *A True Declaration,* pp. 7-8; *A Vindication,* first paragraph; Clarke MSS, Vol. 41, fo. 56/5-6.

410 Parker, "*Observations",* in Haller, *Tracts II,* p. 171; Sharp, *Political Ideas,* p. 139.

411 C.P.I, pp. 331, 339-340.

according to Parker, it had been a minority of the more capable who had taken the initiative to set up a government and establish laws. In so doing, they had acted on behalf, and for the benefit, of the whole community; but without receiving any specific commission from the latter. Buchanan was of the same opinion. While he stated that the supreme authority resided in the people, by "people" he did not mean the undifferentiated mass of the subjects, but only a selected minority, the "best part" of a collectivity. He agreed with traditional political thought that the various citizens had a different share in public affairs according to their rank; even though he seemed to give to the term "rank" a moral rather than socio-economic meaning. In this view, Parliament tended to become a separate body, without a real correspondence with the mass of the subjects. The latter, as individuals, crowds or even organized groups within society, did not enjoy any sovereignty. It is true that at least part of them had the right to elect their representatives. The rule of the latter, therefore, was subject to some extent to consent. However, the election once done they were subjected to the authority of Parliament as once they had been to that of the king. Its nominal representative character ended up attributing to Parliament the same attributes of indisputable, absolutely just authority formerly reserved to the king.[412]

Such an attitude, however, aroused reactions even among Parliament's followers.[413] The most radical and coherent defenders of the sovereignty of the mass of the people were the authors later called

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412 D. Wootton (ed) *Divine Right and Democracy* (Harmondsworth 1986) pp. 49-50; Morgan, *Inventing the People,* pp. 60, 64-65; Weston, Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns,* p. 44; Sharp, *Political Ideas,* pp. 68, 135-136; R. Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge 1993) pp. 229-240.

413 D. Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution. The Crisis of the Winter 1642-1643 and the Origins of Civil War Radicalism" *EHR CV* (1990) p. 662, fn. 6; *CSPD 1645-1647,* p. 451, June 1646; Tuck, *Philosophy and Government,* p. 242.

Levellers.[414] Their early works were published between 1645 and 1647. As has been argued, the Levellers never defined themselves or their objectives as "democratic". Neither can they be considered democratic in the full modern sense. They did not advocate political rights for all members of society, but accepted to leave out some categories (women, servants, beggars).[415] Nevertheless, their discourse anticipates two principles that would be considered fundamental in modern democracy. One was that there were rights that belonged immediately to individuals and could not be taken away from them by anyone. Unlike political rights, the latter belonged to everybody in the same way, including women and servants. The other fundamental concept was that the people should have an active role not only in the selection of those who will govern them, but also in the actual government of society. For the Levellers the sovereignty resided immediately in the people, not even in their representatives, who enjoyed only a "derivative authority".

On the one hand, the Levellers wanted to extend to more people the opportunity to vote, and decide who should govern them. On the other hand, they also aimed to provide the multitude with a power of direct action, outside and above Parliament. The Levellers interpreted literally the principles articulated in the abstract by parliamentarian pamphleteers. In so doing, they unmasked the often mystifying character

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414 On the Levellers as a movement, cf. Brailsford, *Levellers*; T. Pease, *The Leveller Movement* (New York 1916); A. Stopel, *The English Levellers* (Cambridge 1998); on individual Leveller leaders, see J. Frank, *The Levellers* (Cambridge, Mass, 1955). For collections of Leveller writings, see Haller & Davies; Wolfe, *Manifestoes*; G. E. Aylmer (ed) *Levellers*. On the political thought of the Levellers, see D. Wootton, "Leveller Democracy" in J. H. Burns, M. Goldie, *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge 1991); and "The Levellers" in T. Dunn (ed) *Democracy: the Unfinished Journey* (Oxford 1992).

415 Wootton, "Levellers" in Dunn, *Democracy* pp. 73-75.

of Parliament's ideology, a little before the New Model army started doing so.[416]

As an organized political movement, with a coherent programme, the Levellers begin to appear late in 1646. However, partial elaborations of their thought can be already found in previous years. The first significant work on the sovereignty of the people, *England's Misery and Remedy,* was published in 1645. Though generally speaking of Parliament, the author referred more specifically to the Commons. He remarked that the concept of Parliament actually included two entities: the representatives and the represented. Parliament was always defined as a "representative body": that is to say it "stood for", acted on behalf of the people. However, paradoxically, this very circumstance had encouraged it to claim an authority above everything else: including the collectivity it should represent. Now, the author pointed out, this was the same as saying that a messenger, or an ambassador, had more power than the head of state who had appointed them.

For the author of *England's Misery*, on the contrary, Parliament had to be directed in its action by the people. Its function was to put in execution projects and initiatives that the wider collectivity desired, but was too numerous to achieve directly. In so doing Parliament, far from ruling over the people, should be their servant. It was because of a problem of quantity, not of quality (for which some individuals would be more capable than others) that the management of public affairs was entrusted to Parliament.[417]

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416 Morgan, *Inventing the People,* pp. 68, 70; A. Sharp, "John Lilburne and the Long Parliament's Book of Declarations. A radical's exploitation of the word of the authorities", *History of Political Thought,* IX (1988) pp. 19-21; Wootton, "Leveller Democracy", in Burns & Goldie, *Cambridge History,* pp. 426-434. On the New Model see above, pp. 14-15.

417 "England's Misery, and Remedy", in Wootton, *Divine Right,* pp.276-282.

These concepts were further developed in a number of Leveller pamphlets, published in 1646-7. The sovereignty of the multitude, and its control over its representatives, was the underlying theme of the first Leveller petition: *A Remonstrance of many thousand Citizens.* Like the author of *England's Misery,* Overton is convinced that Parliament's functions might have been carried out directly by the collectivity. The latter has chosen to avail itself of the services of some individuals only for reasons of practical convenience. Nevertheless, although through their representatives, it is always the people who decide about common affairs. In this interpretation MP_s are executors rather than autonomous legislators. For this reason, they are removable *at any time* (not just at the end of their mandate, with new elections) if they do not perform their task according to the people's aims.[418]

What is more important, concrete means through which the multitude can express itself are envisaged. Parliament has to make its intentions known before making a law; and to take into account what the people say for or against it. To ensure this freedom of communication, the press must be free and accessible to everybody, and there must be full freedom of petitioning.[419]

"The Remonstrance", like Leveller literature in general, refers to a parliamentary regime, in which there is still a distinction between representatives and represented. Yet the way in which Parliament's functions are interpreted seems to point towards a direct democracy rather than a parliamentary one. In the latter, Parliament members also take initiatives on their own. In the Levellers' view of parliamentary democracy, the delegates of the people do not possess a power of their own. Their role is confined to putting in execution decisions made by the whole assembly on whose behalf they act. As in a direct democracy, they

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418 ibid, p. 3.

419 "A Remonstrance", in Haller, *Tracts,* III p. 19.

can be removed. The Leveller request for annual elections responded to the need to give electors a frequent opportunity to replace those delegates who had not acted in accordance with their opinion[420].

From this point of view, Leveller principles seem to have deeply influenced the army movement of 1647. There was no Leveller propaganda targeted at the army until the autumn of 1647. Neither is there any evidence of direct contacts between Leveller militants and army members until the end of May 1647, when Lieutenant Chillenden sent copies of the Leveller *Large Petition* to be distributed among the soldiery.[421] The New Model actually never theorized any sovereignty of the people in these terms, in any of its documents.

However, there appear a striking similarity between what the Levellers propounded for the organization of the state in 1645-1647 and what the New Model realized in 1647 in its own organization. Both are, though with some differences due to the different contexts, experiments of a direct sovereignty of the people. The army agitators, as we have seen, had always to conform to the decisions of their assembly.[422] Just like the Leveller Parliament members had to follow the directions of their electors. The Levellers' insistence on the need for the representatives of the people to follow strictly the directions of the people represented; their comparison of the role of the MP with that of a simple messenger or ambassador; all this finds a correspondence in the movement's scrupulous attention to "the sence of the army" as a whole. The agitators called before the Commons in April 1647, as we have seen, refused to answer the question about a passage in the petition because the latter was a collective act. Therefore they could not offer their personal

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420 On this point, cf also Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, pp.242-243.

421 Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 205-206; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 63-65; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie*, p. 71.

422 Cf. above, pp. 35-41.

interpretation, but saw themselves as mere messengers, conduits of a message which came from the whole collectivity. [423]

Therefore, either the early political literature of the Levellers could find its way to the New Model before 1647, or the two, the Levellers and the army, developed in parallel but autonomously, roughly in the same period, the same project on society. The New Model seems to have translated the principle of the sovereignty of the people into that of the sovereignty of the whole army; of the rank and file as well as the officers and commanders.

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423 Cf. above, p. 36.

Chapter IV: The Army's Cause

From the eve of the civil war, as we have seen, Parliament and parliamentary pamphleteers had used propaganda to win followers to their cause. They aimed to persuade the people to recognise Parliament as the supreme authority and to support it, financially and militarily. The war once started, however, a more specific type of propaganda was developed, targeted at army members. It was undertaken mainly by army commanders on one side, and military chaplains, or preachers in general, on the other side. In this chapter I will focus especially on the work of the former. Parliament's propaganda focused on two types of argument. One, fully developed by ministers, was the right of the individual to resist an unjust power. The other, particularly present in the specifically military propaganda, was the voluntary, conscientious character of the allegiance to Parliament. It is to the latter that we turn our attention now.

Cromwell, who had been among the first organizers of parliamentary forces, was very soon aware of the need to provide soldiers with ideological motivations as well as technical training. He paid particular attention to the subjective reasons which could persuade soldiers to fight for Parliament, seeing in this the tool to get good military results from them. Cromwell had absorbed in depth the puritan teaching, the idea that God was the sole authority to refer to, who directly addressed his commands to the individual, without intermediaries. If the will of God was in contrast with that of the king, it was the former who had to be obeyed; even if that meant waging war against the king.[424] Cromwell was convinced that the war undertaken by Parliament was a mission entrusted

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424 W. Haller, "The Word of God in the New Model Army", *Church History,* XIX (1950) p.31.

to it by God. It was an ethical and religious commitment, which however also implied making political choices. Parliament defended the true church of God: its cause, therefore, was godly, and those who pledged themselves to it enjoyed God's blessing. At the same time, commitment to this cause was a duty, a necessary pre-condition to deserve His approval. God exhorted everyone, and the young in particular, to "cast in their mite" for the cause.[425] In the letters written by Cromwell during the civil war, to Parliament or to other officers, these concepts often recur.

Sometimes they are expressed in a more conventional manner, without departing from parliamentary official slogans. In a message of April 12, 1643, for example, in which he communicates the appointment of one Cox Tooke as quartermaster, he describes his regiment as a corps raised for "the defence of the king, Parliament and the kingdom". In a letter of September 5, 1644, to Colonel Walton, his brother in law, he basically reiterates these concepts; although this time he does not mention the king: "God ... will in due time, make it appear to the world that we study the glory of God, the honour and liberty of the Parliament ... I profess I could never satisfy myself of the justness of this war, but from authority of the Parliament to maintain itself in its rights". Even in talking about the commitment of his soldiers, he tends to give it a moral rather than specifically political character; he describes them as honest, God-fearing men, who would never do wrong to others etc.[426]

On other occasions, however, the commitment to Parliament acquires a more personal, voluntary character. From this point of view, a letter of August 29, 1643, to the Suffolk Committee, to recruit new troops, is particularly significant. He says: "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain, that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows, than that

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425 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp.244-245, 248, 287.

426 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp.225, 264, 292; A. Woolrych, "Cromwell as a Soldier", in Morrill, *Cromwell*, p. 95.

which you call a gentleman and is nothing else ... It much concerns your good to have conscientious men".[427] In this letter we already find the two key concepts of the politicization of the army for Cromwell: the cause one fights for and conscience. Fighting for Parliament must be a conscientious act, a personal choice: one must be convinced that it is a just cause, which is a moral and religious duty to engage for.

Cromwell would more fully explain his objective several years later, in a speech made to a parliamentary committee in 1657. He recalled the early period of the civil war, and mentioned an exchange of opinions he had had once with John Hampden, a parliamentary leader and friend of his. They just came from the defeat suffered by the Parliament forces at Edgehill, on October 23, 1642. "Your troopers ... are most of them old decayed serving men and tapsters and such kind of fellows; and their troopers are gentlemen's sons ... and persons of quality; do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will be ever able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them? ... You must get men of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else I am sure you will be beaten still".[428]

The principles implied in this speech are not democratic at all, in themselves. However, the conclusion is interesting. At that moment, servants and apprentices could not stand comparison with "persons of quality". Yet for Cromwell the solution was not to try and enlist more gentlemen in the parliamentary army, but to raise a new consciousness in servants. Such a consciousness will be identified with a religious feeling applied to political commitment. In the same speech, in fact, Cromwell

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427 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches,* I, p.256; Haller, "Word of God", pp.32-33; Woolrych, "Cromwell as a Soldier", in Morrill, *Cromwell,* p. 95.

428 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches,* I, p.204; Haller, "Word of God", pp.31-32; Woolrych, "Cromwell as a Soldier", in Morrill, *Cromwell,* p. 94.

claimed that he had always raised men "who had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did".[429]

Since the early days of the war, in August 1642, when he raised volunteers to create his first troop, Cromwell had begun to develop an initially rudimentary propaganda. In urging his hearers to side with Parliament "for the liberty of the Gospel and the law of the Land", he already highlighted the political-religious motivations of the conflict.[430] Here political arguments are still vague. On other occasions, however, Cromwell was more specific. An example is given by a letter addressed to the sheriff of the county of Cornwall, who had sided with the king, to persuade him not to resist the advancing parliamentary forces. Cromwell stated that adhering to Parliament (or not opposing it) meant being concerned with the defence of Religion. At the same time, it also meant feeling committed to advancing the rights and liberties of all the English people; to their liberation from an unjust, oppressive authority.[431] Of course, the propaganda in this case was addressed to the enemy, not to his army. However, it provides a sample of the language and arguments that Cromwell used in defending the parliamentary cause.

In his war correspondence, other ideological statements of this type can be found. In a relation sent to the Houses after the battle of Naseby, he reminded them that his soldiers "ventured their lives for the liberty of their country". In itself, this also is a conventional image, that of the patriot who defends the freedom of his country. However, in this case, the enemy was not a foreigner, but the highest power of one own's country. Even more interesting is what Cromwell added on this subject: "[the soldiers] trust you [Parliament] for the liberty they fight for". This could just mean that they

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429 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, IV, p.271.

430 Hill, *God's Englishman*, p.64; Firth, "Raising of the Ironsides"in Christie, *Essays*, p. 118, fn 3.

431 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp. 272-273.

confidently left to Parliament all decisions to be made on this matter. However, it could also mean that they had entrusted Parliament with a task, and it was its responsibility to perform it well. The preceding sentence, in which Cromwell exhorted the Houses not to give the soldiers reasons for being discouraged, seems to suggest that he had the latter meaning more in mind. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that this passage was suppressed by order of Parliament in the printed version of the letter.[432]

In his two parliamentary speeches of December 9, 1644, to foster the Self-Denying Ordinance and a new model of the army, Cromwell stressed again the importance of ideological motivation in the behaviour of the soldiers. He offered to resign his commission in the army, to give an example of self-denial. For all the popularity he enjoyed, he felt confident that his soldiers would have no objection: they did not fight for one commander or another, but for a cause they believed in. As long as this cause was pursued, they would accept any practical decision Parliament or their superiors would make.[433] Such an assertion might not have wholly corresponded to reality. At least in the first years of the war and in provincial armies, the majority of soldiers did tend to fight out of affection to their commanders, rather than a political consciousness.[434] However, Cromwell's statement is revealing about his inclinations. It is the attitude he probably wanted to encourage in his soldiers. He seemed to require from them a "reasoning" obedience, depending to some extent on a personal judgement about the inherent righteousness of the cause; and the way in which their superiors - inside and outside the army - supported it. This does not mean that Cromwell recognized - at least at this stage - an eventual right of the soldiers to refuse obedience. On the contrary, he emphasized

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432 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p.360; Haller, "Word of God", p.33; Woolrych, "Cromwell as a Soldier", in Morrill, *Cromwell*, p. 96.

433 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 316.

434 Holmes, *Eastern Association*, pp. 38-39.

their readiness to obey any parliamentary order. Nevertheless, in declaring that *they look only at the cause they are fighting for*, he suggested that their going to war on the side of Parliament was neither incidental nor obvious. It was a choice, made out of personal conviction: the conviction Cromwell believed was essential in making good soldiers. However, whether he was aware of it or not, this could also mean that every single soldier was as entitled as his commanders to judge the final goals of Parliament's war.

The army movement proved to have absorbed this argument in depth when they claimed to have taken up arms not just because Parliament had ordered them to do it, but "in judgement and conscience", because they believed the objectives of the Houses to be just. On one occasion, the movement stressed that many people had joined Parliament not so much because the call came from a recognised authority as because they were convinced that their intervention was necessary for the safety of the Nation.[435]

Military newsletters and the army correspondence offer other instances of ideological consciousness, and voluntary support of the cause. One is a letter addressed to the Houses by the commanders of the New Model army after the taking of Sherborne. They expressed the conviction that having done their part was to them a sufficient comfort. They did not look for worldly rewards for their work. Up to this point, it is the traditional sense of duty, of doing what one is expected to do. However, in the letter there is something more. It is underlined that these soldiers have ventured everything, accepting to lose what was dearest to them, for a cause. It is not taken for granted that they should take such risks: having taken them is a particular merit of these men. Moreover, their point of reference in their struggle, the source of reward for them, is not their superiors or even Parliament, but God alone.[436] The same conviction appears in a relation to

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435 "Declaration" in Haller & Davies, p. 55; Clarke MSS, vol. 4 1, fo 56/6.

436 *The Moderate Intelligencer*, N° 25 (August 14-21, 1645) BL, E 297 (12) , p. 197.

Parliament from the Committee of the army at Plymouth, whose garrison was in great straits. The commissioners declared that "nothing but hope and love to the Cause" had enabled them to endure such a condition.[437] Even more significant is the position expressed in another newsletter, from Bridgewater. In warning Parliament of the threat of tumults among the soldiers for lack of pay, military commanders showed that they were sympathetic to the claims of their men. They went as far as stating that it is not right to invoke law and order if soldiers are not given their due, which is barely enough to survive.[438]

Such an attitude is apparently in conflict with usual military regulations: we have seen that they even forbade complaining about one's condition, let alone assembling or making "seditious" speeches. It is true that the letter is addressed to Parliament, which had to provide pay. Probably, if it had been directed to the soldiers, the tone would have been different. On the other hand, a wholly contradictory attitude on the part of military commanders on the same subjects seems unlikely. Something of the opinions expressed in the newsletter must have been perceived by the soldiery. Moreover, on the same occasion, it was stated again that the parliamentary soldiers had voluntarily ventured their lives for a cause.

One must not think that such an attitude was very common at headquarters. More often, in case of mutiny or protests about pay, the "unruly" and "tumultuous" behaviour of the troops was censured. Conversely, the moral value of quiet obedience to superiors was stressed. The Cheshire soldiers, for example, defending themselves from the accusation of being seditious, claimed that it was difficult to find a more obedient and dutiful corps.[439] In spite of this, the sole fact that *also* personal

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437 D'Ewes, fo. 134 (October 5,1644).

438 *A Continuation of the Proceedings of the Army under the Command of Sir Thomas Fairfax* (July 23, 1645) BL, E 293(33), p. 3.

439 *The King's Forces Totally Routed by the Parliaments' Army* (September 24, 1645) BL, E 303 (18) pp. 6-7.

free choice was reckoned as a virtue for a soldier, probably contributed to modify the way in which parliamentary troops saw their role.

Even Skippon, who was usually concerned with the good order of the army, could sometimes offer a different perspective. During the civil war, in spite of his military duties, he enough time to write three devotional books, directed to parliamentary soldiers in particular. Some of the teachings contained in them are quite traditional. In one of these booklets, for example, it is said that prayers and thanksgivings for those in authority are the most welcome to God.[440] However, in other passages a different way of thinking emerges concerning the organization of the church, if not of the state. In both spheres the general, according to the view of his age, identifies change with going back to origins, to an initial purity which had got lost with time.[441] The final result will be a government founded on justice, which will replace the old, corrupted one. As regards the state, God will provide for the people just and wise rulers, who will look after their good. Again conforming to tradition, Skippon thinks that God grants power to some men for the good of the people, but not directly to the people.[442] In the church, however, the process will be different. It will be the believers themselves, once God has freed them from bad teachers, who will provide for the choice of good ones. They themselves will decide which men's teaching is in accordance with the will of God.[443]

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440 P. Skippon, *A Salve for Every Sore* (1643) p. 95.

441 On the theme of returning to origins in puritan ideology, cf. T.D. Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives. The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel-Hill-London 1988). On the bringing up to date of the past in the political debate, cf. C. Hill, "The Norman Yoke", in IDEM, *Puritanism and Revolution*, J. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge 1957) ch. II (II); J. Greenberg, "The Confessor's Laws and the Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution", EHR CIV (1989).

442 Skippon, *Salve*, p. 191.

443 ibid, p. 190.

Moreover, Skippon shows sympathy for the dissenters in official churches: those who are turned out of their congregations because of "God and Truth". Here Skippon, who was commonly considered a religious moderate,[444] seems to depart not only from the Presbyterian, but also the Independent Church; and even from the Baptists. All of them, in different degrees, admitted the expulsion of those who did not follow the established doctrine.[445] In this case, Skippon appears closer to those radical Independents and separatists who thought that, on the one hand, some measure of truth could be found everywhere; on the other hand, nobody could ever attain it completely.[446] He, also, warns orthodox believers that the very people who are seen as heretical, despised and rejected, are often the dearest to God.[447] Skippon too, therefore, though from a different angle, argues in favour of free, responsible choice. Moreover, he clearly backs, on some conditions, dissent from established regulations.

Besides Cromwell, the commander who appeared most interested in the ideological consciousness of his soldiers was the Earl of Manchester. Cromwell, in his charge against him, described him as a moderate, fearful of the consequences for Parliament's supporters in case of a victory for the king. His accusation is at least partly confirmed by Manchester's behaviour, from the Summer of 1644 on. However, before the contest between Presbyterians and Independents broke out, his views on the war were actually very close to those of Cromwell. It is significant that he gave the latter, who was his subordinate in the Eastern Association, wide freedom in the selection of officers. In the early years of the civil war, their criteria in these spheres tended to coincide.

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444 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 38.

445 On church discipline among Congregationalists, see Miller, *New England Mind*, pp.453, 457-458; among the Baptists, MacGregor, Reay, *Radical Religion*, p. 40.

446 Cf. above, pp. 111-112.

447 Skippon, *Salve*, pp.115, 118.

Manchester, too, attached great importance to awareness of the reasons for the struggle, at least among his officers.[448] He believed that a moral and religious commitment was needed to make a good soldier, much more than social status, and even more than military ability. This does not mean that he did not care about the latter at all. He also looked for people with good military experience; and to get them he was prepared to offer them promotion. Nevertheless, "conscience" was what counted most. Sometimes, it was private morality rather than political commitment: Manchester sought men who would not indulge in sexual promiscuity, gambling, drinking etc. However, a sincere support for the parliamentary cause and an authentic religious faith were also important. Faith in particular must be personally, intensely experienced, not just restricted to compliance, however scrupulous, with outward forms of worship.[449] The latter point is the most significant. It has even more weight than loyalty to Parliament, which might also be interpreted in a passive way, as obedience to legitimate authority. The aspect of faith is connected to the original puritan activism, the idea that God expects a mature, whole-hearted response to His calling.

Cromwell and Manchester were not alone, in their concern for an ideological commitment in parliamentary soldiers. Roughly in the same period, the Common Council of London recommended Parliament to choose "discreet, able and *godly* men", as one of the basic points of reform for the army".[450]

Other officers, besides Skippon, wrote pamphlets to give their moral contribution to the war; especially during the debate on the New Model army. In April 1645, for example, an anonymous officer published some

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448 Gardiner (ed), "Letter from the Earl of Manchester", p. 2.

449 Holmes, *Eastern Association*, pp.177, 200.

450 J.C.C., XL, fo. 48 (February 18, 1643).

proposals for a more rational reorganization of armed forces.[451] His arguments were mainly technical: the concluding paragraph, however, was devoted to the reasons for fighting. Although his remarks concern army commanders rather than the soldiery, the principles stated have a more general value. Here, too, the cause one fights for is the main issue. The taking up of arms on the side of Parliament is seen as an ethical-religious duty. Again, the source of authority indicated is not a political body, but God himself, without intermediaries. Certainly Parliament is highly praised, even likened to the stars of the universe. Nonetheless, the engagement of allegiance that officers take when they accept their commissions is not towards Parliament: it is towards God and a cause which is considered His own only. Finally, it is worth noting the entreaty not to take a commission "for any mercenary end", to consider oneself the instrument of a godly plan transcending individual perspective.[452] Such a principle was to be absorbed in depth in the New Model, starting from the rank and file, and was to direct the action of the movement of March 1647.[453] Not being "a mere mercenary army" would be one of the reasons given by the soldiers for their autonomous political action.

The most interesting army pamphlet from a political point of view, considering the later activities of the New Model, was written by an officer who had had to leave the service after being wounded. Unable to fight, he decided to contribute to the cause through propaganda. His tract[454] is in the form of a sermon, or commentary on a verse of the Old Testament, Jeremiah XLVIII, 30. The author justifies the undertaking of a task normally pertaining to ministers, remarking that "it sometimes pleases God

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451 *The Reformed Army* (April 4, 1645) BL, E 276 (14).

452 ibid, pp.14-15.

453 "A Representation from the Army", in Woodhouse, *Puritanism*, p. 405.

454 W. Withfield, *Idolaters Ruine and England's Triumph, or the Meditations of a Maimed Soldier* (January 17, 1645) BL, E 25 (3).

by weak instruments to effect great things". He argues that anyone can have something to say, from which others will draw a moral teaching. He recognizes that care must be taken not to create confusion, undertaking a work of preaching all at the same time. However, he is confident that, with some precaution, such a proceeding will give good results, spreading godly knowledge among believers.[455] The author therefore defends the right to preach also for the laity, in a way setting an example (although in a written, instead of oral, form). He seems a forerunner of a tendency that would be widespread in the New Model army the following year.[456] However, unlike the unauthorized army preachers of 1646, Whitfield appears orthodoxly Presbyterian in his views. The arguments set out in *Idolaters Ruine* are basically those used by Presbyterian ministers and chaplains in the first years of the war: the identification of Parliament's followers with the people of God, and of the royalists with Antichrist; the equivalence between the defence of the Gospel and the safeguard of the rights of the subjects;. the condemnation of catholic worship as a form of idolatry.[457] Moreover, from a political point of view, this officer appears definitely moderate, at least on the subject of the authority of the sovereign. He states that "The Lord honours Princes here on earth, to sit as Gods to judge the people righteously in this world, like the children of the most high".[458] The king can, on some occasions, be "angry with his people upon lawfull grounds". He can even stop and punish their actions, if he judges them harmful for the church, or the state, or himself.

Here the author comes very close to royalist positions, in which the multitude is unable to discern what is good for the state. However, there are

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455 Whitfield, *Idolaters Ruine*, dedicatory epistle, pp.1-2; "The Apologie", p.1.

456 Cf. below, pp. 272-279.

457 Cf. chapter V: Militant Preachers.

458 Whitfield, *Idolaters Ruine*, p. 4.

also cases in which it is the people who can be justly angry with their sovereign. Like puritan ministers, in their wartime propaganda, Whitfield sends contradictory messages to his audience. On the one hand, he defines monarchs as the children of the Most High, gods sent by the Lord to judge His people. On the other hand, however, he maintains that even a sovereign can reject divine commandments, and force his people into immoral practices. In this case, resisting his authority is obeying the superior commands of God. This immorality, moreover, does not concern religious matters only: it also regards the life and welfare of all subjects, who are, after all, God's people. They have their own measure of dignity.[459]

This is why honouring the Gospel also implies respecting the rights of the multitude; why the latter, no matter in what weak and low condition, can still override the sovereign. For Whitfield, too, as for other puritan propagandists, God does not like the pride of the powerful, and is near to the little ones of this world.[460] For all its contradictions, this officer offers to his readers, in and outside the army, a reason for refusing obedience.

Military propaganda did not make use of speeches and pamphlets only. Religious services were an important component, too. These were mainly carried out by chaplains through sermons, but also practices like public prayers, days of fasting and humiliation, etc. especially on the occasion of battles. The official purpose of these religious exercises was usually conventional: asking God to obtain victory over the enemy, or

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459 Whitfield, *Idolaters Ruine*, pp. 12-14.

460 Whitfield, *Idolaters Ruine*, pp.5-9. For examples of this concept in parliamentary propaganda, cf. *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 22 (July 24-31, 1645) BL, E 294 (16), p. 169; Cromwell's letter after the battle of Naseby, in Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p.365; *A More Exact Relation of the Great Defeat given to Goring's Army in the West* (July 17, 1645) BL, E 293 (8) p. 7; *Mercurius Civicus*, N° 93 (February 27-March 6, 1645) BL, E 271 (16), p. 843; *Scotish Dove*, N° 73 (March 7-14, 1645) BL, E 273 (10), p. 571; Skippon, *Salve*, p.107; *Scotish Dove*, N° 93 (July 25 - August 1, 1645) BL, E 294 (20), p. 730.

thanking Him for granting this favour.[461] In some cases, however, the wider political-religious reasons for the struggle were also emphasised. After the second battle of Newbury, for example, Parliament set a day of thanksgiving. In the ordinance announcing it, it did not speak in terms of military victory, but of deliverance from a condition of slavery and oppression.[462] On another occasion, in ordering a public collection for maimed soldiers, the Houses reminded the people that their enemy was also the enemy both of religion and of the liberty of the subjects. The one and the other were again linked together.[463] Moreover religious exercises, in themselves, could offer opportunities to develop some kind of ideological consciousness. At least on this occasion, soldiers were positively requested to think about what they were doing. They had to consider carefully both their personal actions and those of the army as a whole. They had to wait and listen to God's voice, showing them what the right end was.

During the siege of Bridgewater, on the eve of the storming of the town, the army spent the whole day (which was made to coincide with a Sunday) in prayer and meditation. The aim was "to seek God" to understand clearly what His will was, concerning the ensuing day's action[464]. The same course was taken by General Laugharne's troops, on the day following the taking of Pembroke, and preceding the attack on Carew castle. Being two different occasions, it was called both a day of thanksgiving for the victory already obtained, and one of public humiliation to prepare for the difficult task still to be undertaken.[465] On the eve of the

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461 *C.J.* III, p. 636 (September 23, 1644); p. 673 (October 23, 1644); p. 677 (October 25, 1644); p. 686 (November 4, 1644); p. 687 (November 5, 1644); *C.J.* IV, p.124 (April 28, 1645); p. 175 (June 16, 1645); p. 189 (June 30, 1645).

462 *L.J.* VII, p. 46 (November 4, 1644).

463 *C.J.* IV, p. 185 (June 24, 1645).

464 *A Continuation of the Proceedings of the Army* (July 29, 1645) BL, E 294 (9), p. 1.

465 *A True Relation of the Late Successe ... in Pembrokeshire* (August 1, 1645) BL, E 298(6), pp. 6-7.

storming of Bristol, a fast day was ordered, to seek God's guidance as well as to ask His help in the action. In the same period, another day of prayer and fasting was set in Bristol, before advancing against the royalists in Devon. It was thought necessary to listen to God to interpret His will correctly, to see if he really wanted the parliamentary army to advance.[466] In March 1646, the parliamentary committee residing with the English and Scottish Army ordered a fast day, again to call for God's blessing on the next military initiatives. Parliament was about to demand the surrender of Newark; and in case this was denied, its army would have to try a very risky attack. It was a difficult decision to make and military commanders felt that the army needed the guidance of God.[467] As we shall see, some ministers particularly encouraged this type of insight among soldiers.[468]

These religious practices would be given a relevant space also by the army movement of 1647; however, they were to be adapted to its new political goals, as they were concerned to know what course to take in civil society rather than in battle. When the army looked into itself to discover possible sins, these would tend to have a political, collective nature; not a private one, as in the past. In 1645, during the siege of Bristol, the council of war had declared that all vices within the army would be detected and punished, in order to reacquire God's favour.[469] The parliamentary *Souldiers Catechisme* pointed to licentiousness and drunkenness as the sins most destructive of the moral strength of the combatants.[470]

The officers gathered in prayer at Windsor, in April 1648, to seek what had driven them to the verge of a new civil war, were to find a very

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466 Firth, *Cromwell's Army,* p. 322; Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 97.

467 *Perfect Diurnall*, N° 139 (March 23-30, 1646) BL, E 506 (23) (Friday March 27).

468 Cf. below, pp. 184, 190-191, 229-230.

469 Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 97.

470 R. Ram, *The Souldiers Catechisme* (1644) reprinted by Partizan Press (1986) p. 19.

different kind of sin: the compromise accepted with the king, the attempt to set him on his throne again, on his own conditions; in spite of his responsibility for the bloodshed amongst his people.[471] However *The Souldiers Pocket Bible*, an early army religious booklet, already mentioned, metaphorically, the breaking of the covenant agreed on between God and Israel: in this case, too, the responsibility identified was no longer an individual one; it concerned a collectively taken engagement.[472] Another, more elementary type of army propaganda was that which made use of banners and mottoes: the pictures and the inscriptions put on the banners conveyed sometimes a religious, or political, or political-religious message.[473]

Beside freedom and personal choice, another frequent theme in the army propaganda was that of the victory of the weak over the strong. Parliamentary forces had several reasons to feel vulnerable. We have seen that parliamentary soldiers were branded as traitors and rogues by their adversaries. Considering the situation, the doubt of really being so must have crossed their minds more than once. Parliamentary propaganda needed something to counterbalance this feeling: it found it in religion. Parliament did not try to deny its own weakness: on the contrary, it emphasized it on many an occasion. At the same time, however, Parliament expressed its confidence that God would enable it to win in spite of this. He would make its inferiority into a strength. Military correspondence often reported victories obtained against an enemy twice as strong as parliamentary forces; when, moreover, the latter were already wearied by previous engagements. Such a nearly miraculous issue was attributed to

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471 "A Faithful Memorial", in Scott, *Somers Tracts,* p. 501.

472 [E. Calamy, Sr] *The Souldiers' Pocket Bible* (1643) reprinted in facsimile (London 1895) p. 8.

473 On this subject cf. I. Gentles, "The Iconography of Revolution: England 1642-1649"; in I. Gentles et alii, *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen of the English Revolution* (Cambridge 1998).

divine help. Sometimes the parallel with the case of David and Goliath was mentioned.[474] The correspondent of the *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* remarked (perhaps not entirely reflecting reality) that the New Model army had no old, experienced soldiers. God had chosen to use extremely young soldiers, of humble descent and generally despised, to show them capable of seizing six enemy garrisons in six weeks.[475] Captain Blackwell, too, described the New Model as a company of poor men, little esteemed in the kingdom, whom God had called to serve His cause.[476]

The emphasis put on the outcast condition of parliamentary soldiers had, of course, propagandist reasons as well. It better exalted, in contrast, the successes of the new army. The New Model had had a troubled start: in the early period, it had suffered criticism and sarcasm from many parts. The royalists had nicknamed it "the New Noddle" and the Scots considered Fairfax a poor commander. Therefore its victories were felt by its supporters as a riposte to all this.[477] Yet, whatever the immediate reasons for these tendencies of official propaganda, in the long run they may have affected the soldiers' view in a wider way. First of all, the awareness of enjoying God's blessing, a stronger support than any earthly power, must have inspired much confidence in themselves and their final goals; in the soldiery even more than commanders, who had fewer reasons to feel powerless. It considerably supported the theories of the right to resistance, because it proved them not only to be lawful - which might not be a sufficient encouragement to act - but also achievable.

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474 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp.230, 242; *Moderate Intelligencer* (July 24-31, 1645) p. 169.

475 N° 110, p. 878.

476 *A More Exact Relation*, p. 7.

477 Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 99-100; E.C. Walker, *William Dell, Master Puritan* (Cambridge 1970) pp. 42, 44.

Besides, there were other possible developments. The tendency to humiliate oneself to exalt the glory of God alone might produce, in the long run, an undervaluing of human abilities and elements of prestige; even, sometimes, of military efficiency. Differences in individual faculties were not acknowledged as being of value, since God could make these abilities void at any moment. Even those who possessed them had to act as if they did not have any, to avoid placing themselves, instead of God, in central position: a blasphemous attitude that the Lord in time would punish.

Cromwell stressed this point particularly. In commenting on the victory at Naseby, he remarked that God makes use of poor, ignorant men, of "things that are not", to "bring to naught things that are"[478]. In other letters, returning to the subject, he insisted that it was God, not the attacking force of the armies or the commanders' strategic abilities, that made victory possible. Refusing to acknowledge this truth would be the attitude of an atheist.[479]

Fairfax agreed with Cromwell in attributing his army's successes to God alone. In informing Parliament of the victory at Naseby, he described it as a gift granted by God.[480] Skippon, who on this occasion was given a commendation by the Houses for his gallantry, was of the same opinion. His was a worthless contribution; God alone was the author of the victory.[481]

The same concept was expressed by Col. Birch, another parliamentary officer, in a relation to the Houses about the taking of Hereford: "The mercy is wonderful. I desire the Lord may have the Honour

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478 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 365, Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 99; Haller, "Word of God", p. 33.

479 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, pp. 292, 340, 360; Haller, "Word of God", p. 32; Davis, "Cromwell's Religion", in Morrill, *Cromwell*, p. 188.

480 *L.J.* VII, p. 433 (June 16, 1645).

481 *L.J.* VII, p. 450 (June 21, 1645).

of it, for it is his own work". In this case it is not simply a question of a dutiful respect to God. Military success is thought to have really been effected by Him, not by the force of arms. It is true that Birch, before, had commended the ability and courage of his soldiers: however, the deep conviction of the final statement tends to undermine the former.[482] In a relation to Parliament from the army, on the successful issue of a confrontation with prince Rupert's troops, it was maintained that the victory had been effected by God. He had simply made use of the Foot and Horse of Manchester as instruments to effect it.[483] Even the Earl of Essex, who appears less religiously committed, in informing the Houses about the timely discovery of an attempt to blow up the train of artillery, declared: "It was God's providence that prevented it, without the help of man".[484]

The Souldiers Pocket Bible, too, taught this lesson. Combatants were warned not to trust their technical abilities and knowledge, or the material means at their disposal, to get victory. David's remark in psalm 33 was reported: "A king is not saved by the multitude of an Hoste, neither is the mighty man delivered by much strength". The enemy can count only on material strength: this is why they are defeated. The parliamentary army, on the contrary, commands only a negligible force. However, it still wins, because it has God on its side: He fights with the soldiers; actually in their stead, as it is said in the second book of the Chronicles. Reversing the usual perspective, it is when soldiers are weaker, in a condition of inferiority, that they can be really confident of success.[485] This does not mean that God supports the weaker as such, regardless of their objectives. Parliamentary propagandists agree that only initiatives in accordance with God's will can

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482 *L.J.* VIII, p. 59 (December 18, 1645).

483 D'Ewes, fo. 90 bis (July 8, 1644).

484 ibid, fo. 115 (August 28, 1644).

485 [Calamy, Sr] *Souldiers Pocket Bible*, pp. 3, 14.

be successful. Concerning wars in particular, only those commanded by Him can be undertaken[486]. In writing to Valentine Walton, his brother in law, Cromwell said that the recent parliamentary victories were a gift granted by the Lord to "the godly party". The latter had prevailed only because of its godliness.[487] However, given that their reasons were just, the weaker paradoxically had more chances to win. Since they were not able to defend themselves, God intervened to help them: and His intervention was more effective than any human force could be.

One must not think that these principles were really accepted in their entirety by the soldiers, and even less by their commanders. The New Model army had been created following, first of all, criteria of military efficiency. Nevertheless, the frequent reiteration of this kind of message must have had some effect on the way in which respective roles were conceived within the army. Although different ranks, and corresponding levels of authority, in fact remained, their "moral" value was much lessened. It is true that equality among all men only existed with regard to God, without annulling social ranks and individual abilities. However, since the latter were irrelevant in achieving the prefixed goals, the situation actually seemed to reverse. It was the differences in rank and merit that became nominal, while the spiritual equality among men was the matter of fact.

This was not to lead to the abolition of military hierarchy, even after the Spring of 1647. In the General Council of the army, commanders and officers would still sit alongside soldier-agitators. However, there these distinctions would be purely formal, and would not affect the free character of the debate.

As we can see, the propaganda carried out in the military milieu was opposed and complementary to army discipline and hierarchical structure.

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486 J. Burroughs, *The Glorious Name of God, the Lord of Hosts* (1642) pp. 7-9.

487 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 287.

Stressing concepts of individual, conscientious choice and spiritual equality, it was likely to counteract the usual military emphasis on authority and obedience.

Chapter V: The Role of Preachers. The Militants

Ministers played a primary role in the mobilization of public opinion towards a war on the side of Parliament, between 1642 and 1643. Later, they continued to keep up the morale of Parliament's followers in critical phases of the conflict. Military chaplains would perform the same task specifically within the army. Their respective roles, however, as we shall see, are often not clearly separable: ministers appointed to a town could occasionally preach to the local garrison. Conversely, various chaplains were also parliamentary preachers, even members of the Westminster Assembly.

Of course ministers were not the only parliamentary propagandists: constitutional theorists and lawyers, as well as newsbook correspondents, had an equally relevant role. It has been argued that the latter were even more important, since pamphlets and gazettes were printed and could reach a much wider audience. Ministers in their sermons addressed only a limited number of hearers. However several sermons, especially the ones directed to Parliament, were published soon after. Besides, some preachers, as we shall see for Marshall, preached on the same subject in front of different audiences, on various occasions. Above all, the moral authority ministers of religion enjoyed in the seventeenth century was far greater than that of lay pamphleteers.[488]

Contemporary royalist witnesses attributed to propaganda from the pulpits the wide support which allowed Parliament to declare war against the king. Charles I himself was convinced of it. In a declaration to the Houses, written after he had been denied access to Hull, in the Spring of 1642, he blamed the "tumultuous" behaviour of ministers. He held them responsible for spreading among the people the idea that "human laws do

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488 J. T. Peacey, "Henry Parker and the Parliamentary Propaganda in the English Civil Wars" PhD Thesis (Cambridge 1994) pp. 5-6.

not bind the Conscience". In a later declaration, in August 1642, he argued that the preaching of God's word had become a mere pretext to offend the authorities in both church and state. It was a means publicly to vent seditious opinions, which according to the laws of the land constituted high treason.[489]

Clarendon accused ministers of using the Bible as a mere tool to attack the crown. Through the figures of impious kings of the Old Testament, and their often violent deaths, they aimed at discrediting the king and undermining his power. The royalist chaplain Edward Symmons made the same complaint.[490] A contemporary royalist witness, Thomas Wiseman, in January 1642, already appeared concerned by the "liberty of factious preaching of ill affected ministers to the present government of church and state". He saw the two spheres as closely related, and both threatened by the preachers propaganda.[491]

Parliament soon perceived the potential represented by ministers to foster its cause. The "middle-group" within it, led by Pym and the allies of the Earl of Essex, entertained close relations with ministers, such as Edmund Calamy and Stephen Marshall. Parliament made special use of the days of fasting and humiliation, which, although sporadically, had been a custom since the reign of James I. They consisted in abstention from food and work, and participation in religious exercises.

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489 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, pp.65-66.

490 E. Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, ed W. D. Macray (Oxford 1958-1969) IV p. 194; W. Sheils, "Provincial Preaching on the Eve of the Civil War: some West Riding Fast Sermons" in A. Fletcher, P. Roberts (eds) *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge 1994) p. 293; C. Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (Harmondsworth 1993) pp. 103, 104; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, p. 66.

491 *CSPD 1641-1643*, pp. 254-255 (January 14, 1642). On the role of preachers in justifying by religious arguments political and social revolution, during the English civil war, cf also Baskerville, *Not Peace but a Sword.*

Occasionally, local authorities, too, employed preachers for propaganda purposes. At the beginning of 1643, for example, London's Common Council charged the city ministers with the collection of funds for the war, in their respective parishes. At the same time, they were requested to promote the parliamentary cause among their parishioners: contribution to the collection should be presented to the citizens as a moral duty.[492]

But it was first of all the Commons who made use of ministers for political purposes, through their sermons at fast days. The latter were sometimes a means to announce, and justify on moral grounds, Parliament's initiatives and decisions: both long-term ones and those dictated by more immediate considerations. Sermons had the function of persuading the people of the need for given measures, arousing their enthusiasm or their anger, and driving them to demand in their turn the adoption of the same measures.[493] Another important objective of sermons was to emphasize the just authority of Parliament. The latter, it was reminded, was the supreme court of justice of England. It was the source of the country's strength, like Samson's hair. The Houses alone, declared another preacher, had the power of lawmaking; moreover, they shared with the king the power of law-enforcement.[494]

Nevertheless, ministers should not be seen simply as passive agents of the policy decided by Parliament. While some had close connections and a patron-and-client relation with some MP[s], many pursued their own objectives. The latter might be in common with those of the Houses, but probably most preachers would have pursued them anyway. Steps such as the abolition of episcopacy or the removing of

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492 *J.C.C.*, XL, fo 48 (February 18, 1643).

493 H. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London 1967) pp. 296, 304-305, 310-14; Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 82-83.

494 Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 91, 92, 94.

ceremonies had been requested by both ministers and part of the people at the end of 1640, long before fast-days were established.[495] Sermons by City preachers initiated many petitions of citizens to Parliament.

The introduction of regular fast-days had itself initially been requested in a petition of London ministers to the Houses. Obtaining freedom of preaching had been a primary objective of the clergy since the calling of the Long Parliament: as a result, the bill which gave liberty to the pulpits had been one of the first measures of the new assembly, in November 1640. In the Autumn of the ensuing year, the Commons authorized the inhabitants of every parish to organize regular sermons, and elect and maintain a preacher where there was none. The connection between ministers and people seems therefore closer, in general, than that between the former and the Houses.[496] Ministers seemed well aware of the relevance of their role: more than one sermon addressed to Parliament insists on the need to send preachers into the most remote parts of the country, to counterbalance popish and royalist propaganda.[497]

Some ministers were already carrying out an underground political activity of their own before the war, though always in relation to ecclesiastical policy. In the summer of 1640, for instance, five of them had petitioned against the new "etcetera oath" and canons. All of them, Burgess, Burroughs, Calamy, Downing and Goodwin, would become renowned parliamentary preachers. Burroughs and Bridge, as early as the late Thirties, had been engaged in the publication of political protest literature abroad, especially at Amsterdam. This mainly consisted of

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495 Shaw, *English Church,* I, pp. 7-26.

496 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* pp. 16-18, 24-25, 66.

497 Hill, *English Bible*, pp.85, 89-90. On the concern of preachers and even lay puritans to carry out a religious-political education of English rural areas, especially the North and the West, cf. C. Hill, "Puritans and the Dark Corners of the Land" in IDEM, *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth Century England* (London 1974) esp. pp. 23-32 for the period of the civil wars.

pamphlets against episcopacy; but also against monarchy, insofar as it supported prelacy. These writings, in a second phase, were secretly introduced in to England.[498]

Both Burroughs and Bridge, during the war, would address parliamentary soldiers in some of their sermons.[499] It is true that at least some ministers conducted their propaganda in conjunction with groups in Parliament. Influence was exerted on both sides. Ministers praised Parliament, and urged the public to follow its advice. Yet they could also rebuke it, or exhort it to follow their guidance. Marshall, for example, politically an unofficial agent of Pym,[500] did not hesitate in a fast sermon to remind the House that they were but tools in God's hands: He who had effected the late reforms, through them.[501] Other preachers stressed this purely instrumental role, or admonished the Houses on other points. Parliament was urged to keep faithfully to its duty, which was to preserve the liberty of the subject as well as its own. Furthermore, it was warned that it had to examine its own faults, not only those of the king or of other powers of the state. The attitude towards the Lords was even more severe. They were admonished that God does not love the mighty, and often punishes them as conceited, wicked men. They were reminded that they were bound to observe the covenant made with God as much as the meanest of subjects.[502]

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498 J. Peacey, "Parliamentary Propaganda", pp. 17-18, 50.

499 Cf. below, pp. 203, 204-205.

500 Trevor - Roper, *Religion,* pp. 323-24. On the political role of Pym in the first three years of the Long Parliament see, J. Hexter, *The Reign of King Pym* (Cambridge Mass 1941) part I; J. Morrill, "The Unweariableness of Mr Pym" in S. Amussen, M. Kishlansky (eds) *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester 1995).

501 S. Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (February 1642) BL. E 133 (19) p. 44.

502 Hill, *English Bible,* pp. 92, 95, 96; Lamont, *Godly Rule,* p. 82.

In preachers' sermons, a more and more hostile attitude towards the king can be traced. At first, the king himself was not attacked; the criticism was directed towards "evil counsellors", identified with papists (especially Jesuits). The latter, together with the catholic church and the corrupt Anglican clergy, were the real objects of invective. However, what was censured in the catholic church (and in the Episcopal order which was its incarnation in England) was often the hierarchical dimension; the concept of submission to a human superior. Sometimes this rejection of hierarchy was extended to the civil sphere as well. John Goodwin, a leading Independent preacher, considered all doctrines which discriminated excessively between superiors and inferiors as a mark of the Antichrist. Goodwin was not in favour of complete equality, nor of total absence of any superior power. However, he believed that authority should have limits and that subordinates had their own sphere of rights and liberties. This implies that fighting Antichrist also meant opposing hierarchy and absolute powers.[503] Christ's followers were often identified with subaltern classes. They were "men of ordinary rank and quality", according to John Goodwin; even "the poor and offscouring of the world", both for him and Marshall. Similarly they were the common people, despised by higher classes, according to the author of the sermon *A Glimpse of Sions Glory*, (1641): although for the latter the decisive work would be done by Parliament, the people would initiate the process.[504]

With the progress of the war, the attitude towards the king became more and more aggressive. The example of Hebrew kings who had met a violent death for ruling arbitrarily was often mentioned. It was warned

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503 Hill, *Antichrist*, pp. 83-84.

504 Hill, *Antichrist*, pp. 81-85, 88-89; Marshall, *Meroz Cursed*, p. 8; "A Glimpse of Sion's Glory", in S. E. Prall, *The Puritan Revolution: a Documentary History* (Gloucester, Mass 1973).

that God did not make distinctions: He was ready to overthrow kings, with all their courts and councils, if they acted unjustly. Burroughs, in 1643, declared that it was better not having any king than having one who did not adequately protect his subjects. He admitted that the question was more suitable for a discussion in Parliament than in the pulpit: yet he still put it.

It is even more significant that he maintained: "it is unlawful for any people to obey unlawful commands of their governors". Here armed resistance was still not mentioned: but the preacher provided the necessary premise to it. In another sermon, the godly were urged to fight monarchy and also aristocracy, as an ally of the former in hindering the reform of the church.[505] More and more often, the responsibility for the blood shed in the civil war was laid on the king. The blood of protestants spilt under the reign of Mary Tudor, which cried for revenge, was recalled. Both king and nobles were blamed for oppressing the people. Oppression was one of the sins most vehemently denounced by civil war preachers.[506]

Before turning our attention to specific army preaching, a final point must be considered: the bloodthirsty tone, the ruthlessness towards the enemy, that so often seems an hallmark of parliamentary civil war sermons. Especially in the first years of the war, urging the resort to violence seems the main objective of puritan preachers. This attitude manifests itself in two ways: exalting warlike spirit, and requiring vengeance on those guilty of bloodshed.

The former was an attitude inherent in the English religious tradition since the Reformation. Sin was considered as a symptom of effeminacy: a good Christian, at the same time, had always to have both a

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505 Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 85-86, 90, 95, 105-106.

506 ibid, pp. 96-97. Baskerville, *Not Peace but a Sword*, pp. 58-63.

Bible and a sword with him.[507] The other element in the preachers' propaganda - the call to shed the blood of God's enemies - also had a tradition in the puritan way of thinking. It was believed that a violent crime could be atoned for only shedding on its turn the blood of the culprit: not, however, by private individuals, but by the state authorities. It was God who required it, as a way of re-establishing justice. This principle applied to everybody, including the persons in authority themselves. In the latter case, preachers would address a different authority, asking for its intervention. The civil war of course strengthened this kind of feeling; and Parliament became the body charged with the task of "doing justice on blood". Those who hesitated to do so were threatened with God's curse.[508] However, during the civil war, this advocacy of violent justice began to acquire a new character. The crimes censured involved not just individuals, although in authority, but some institutions of the state (notably the crown). Even the type of guilt changed, becoming more clearly political: it was mainly the repression of dissenting minorities, both within the church and the state.[509]

The preaching directed at the army shared the characteristics of parliamentary sermons in general. In this chapter I will consider not only the propaganda of official military chaplains, but also that of ministers in towns where the army was garrisoned; and the sermons by non-military preachers to the troops on special occasions. Concerning chaplains, they were originally assigned to single regiments, appointed by the respective colonels, who often already knew them. In the New Model, however, they would be part of the central army staff, together with victuallers,

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507 Collinson, *Birthpangs*, pp. 127-132; Walzer, *Revolution,* VIII.

508 S. Baskerville, "Blood Guilt in the English Revolution", *Seventeenth Century* VIII (1993) pp. 183-184; Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 97-98; Trevor Roper, *Religion,* pp. 305, 308, 318.

509 Baskerville, "Blood Guilt", pp. 184-187.

surgeons, general officers etc. Not being tied to a specific regiment, they were free to move from one unit to another, which considerably widened the scope of their influence. The task of chaplain was not only or mainly spiritual but one of propaganda. Sermons and religious exercises, as we have seen, were meant first of all to confirm soldiers' allegiance to Parliament. In the New Model, faith tended to become a form of political creed, and vice versa.

Besides these religious and political duties, chaplains performed more military ones. They wrote newsletters and reports to the Houses on the material conditions and the prevailing mood in the army, especially among soldiers; and related the course of military campaigns. Some reports were published by order of Parliament, as war correspondence. Occasionally, chaplains also acted as go-betweens during negotiations with the enemy. Their competence was not limited, therefore, to spiritual comfort. Chaplains were highly considered and allowed to give their advice in the council of war.[510] Their role in 1642-1646 has been likened to that of political commissars in the armies of the French revolution.[511]

Among chaplains, those with a stronger ideological commitment to the parliamentary cause seem to have chosen field armies, more directly engaged in the war. Often they had opposed Laud's rule in the 1630s and had suffered some kind of persecution. Preachers in garrison towns and provincial armies were usually less ideologically committed. However, as we shall see, this was not always true. Finally, most army chaplains were learned men, who had attended university and obtained a degree.[512]

Military preachers can be roughly divided into two categories: the militants and the reformers. The militants appear mainly concerned to

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510 Firth, *Cromwell's Army,* pp.328-329; Donagan " Did Ministers Matter?", pp. 126-127; Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* pp.7-10.

511 Walker, *William Dell,* pp. 44-45, 48.

512 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* pp. 18-19.

urge soldiers to fight absolutism and popery; pointing out to them the moral and religious justifications of their choice. The reformers were interested less in this initial "pars destruens" than in the ensuing work of reconstructing the church (and, by extension, society) on entirely new principles. Without this essential outcome, even victory in the war would prove fruitless. Militant preachers were usually orthodox Presbyterians. The reformers, on the contrary, tended to be outside the national Church, and closer to congregational and separatist models. Militant propaganda was widespread during the civil war period, especially until 1645: these were the years in which a parliamentary victory seemed problematic. This type of preaching virtually disappeared with the end of the conflict, its usefulness being over. Reformer chaplains, on the contrary, began to be active in 1645, when parliamentary successes made military issues less urgent, and the approach of victory opened the prospect of a rebuilding the church. The preaching of the reformers would reach its peak in 1646-7, just before the army movement came to the fore. However, this distinction is to be used with caution. Reform proposals, especially regarding the church, are implicit in many militant sermons. Conversely, "militant" characteristics can be traced in the attitude of reformer preachers, as we will see. Moreover among the militants a sub-group can be discerned, which was concerned both with the right to armed resistance and with constitutional issues.[513]

Military chaplains had towards soldiers the same task the other ministers had towards the people in general. They had to work out a justification, on moral and political grounds, for what seemed "a war of rebellion". As we have seen, Parliament had avoided confronting directly the issue of the right to resist the king's authority: it had preferred to present itself as the executioner of justice on the sovereign's evil counsellors. We have also seen that both ministers and parliamentary

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513 Cf. ch. VI - The Constitutional Militants.

pamphleteers had been more daring: they had acknowledged a right to resistance, or at least disobedience, in the representatives of the people and even in the subjects themselves. Military chaplains made use of both justifications, sometimes in the same sermon or writing. The proceeding seems to undermine the consistency of the argument. Nevertheless, in practice, it allowed them to foreshadow bolder perspectives, while keeping faithful to official parliamentary slogans. In spite of this caution, their propaganda in some points not only goes farther, but appears conflicting to some extent with that of Parliament.

Chaplains referred to Parliament as the first source of legitimation for the war, which had been undertaken by Parliament's warrant. It was maintained that its authority, as the supreme lawmaker and court of justice in the kingdom, was even greater than that of the king.[514] At the same time, they also tried to preserve in some way the authority of the latter. A distinction was made between his person and the principle of authority he represented; even between his person in general, always deserving respect, and the actions done by him at a particular moment. The latter could have been inspired by the devil. Or he might have been misled by false and tendentious information given by the people around him. It was not therefore against the king that the war was conducted; but against his wicked advisers and courtiers, or papists or against the forces of evil which had seized him.[515]

Yet, compared to what Parliament officially maintained in the same period, the elements of novelty in the chaplains' teaching are relevant. First of all there is the more active role attributed to the mass of

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514 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme*, p.5; S. Marshall, *A Copie of a Letter....with The Lawfulness of Parliaments Taking Up Defensive Armes* (1643) BL, E 102 (10) p. 22; W. Bridge, *A Sermon Preached unto the Volunteers of the City of Norwich, and also to the Volunteers of Great Yarmouth in Norfolk* (January 31, 1642) BL, E 89 (7) p. 18.

515 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme*, pp. 4-6; S. Ashe, *Good Courage Discovered, and Encouraged* (May 17, 1642) BL, E 149 (26), pp. 12, 19; C. Love, *Englands Distemper* (January 30, 1645) BL, E 274 (15), pp. 28, 42.

the people, not only or simply to their representatives, or "inferior magistrates". All English commoners are often reckoned capable of weighing the proceedings of their rulers, and reacting in consequence: both by not obeying the commands they judge not to be right, and by actively resisting them. At the same time, it is admitted that even rulers can do wrong; even sovereigns, in spite of their divine appointment, are subject to the influence of the devil, just like every other human being. While Parliament is seen as a source of legitimation, it is not the only one, or the most significant. Both Scripture and reason, God's judgement and that of the individual conscience, carry more weight.[516] Scripture, the Old Testament in particular, provides a justification for both passive and active resistance: on the one hand there is Daniel entering the den of lions so as not to forsake God; on the other hand, the rising of Israel's tribes against Saul to protect his son David.[517]

Stephen Marshall, a minister in an Essex village, was appointed as permanent preacher at St. Margaret's, Westminster, in 1642. However, between the Summer of 1642 and the Autumn of 1643, he was also chaplain in Essex's army.[518] He became famous in February 1642, after preaching a sermon to the House of Commons, called *Meroz Cursed*: a commentary on a passage in Judges (V, 23). The sermon, conceived for a parliamentary fast, was later preached by Marshall in different parts of the country.[519] The basic message was that those who did not pledge

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516 Burroughs, *Name of God,* pp. 27, 39, 129; W. Bridge, *The Wounded Conscience Cured* (January 1643) BL, E 89 (8), pp. 1-2; J. Eachard, *Good News for all Christian Souldiers* (1645) BL, E 271 (6), p. 8.

517 Ashe, *Good Courage,* pp. 20-21; Marshall, *Copie of a Letter,* pp.10-20; [Ram] *Souldiers Catechisme,* p.4; Eachard, *Good News,* pp. 11-12.

518 *BDBR,* I, pp. 217-218; J. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament* (Princeton 1969) p.110.

519 BDBR, II, p. 217; Sheils, "Provincial Preaching", in Fletcher & Roberts, p. 302.

themselves to fight for the Lord, against his mighty enemies, would be cursed for ever. The biblical passage it was taken from was very popular in the English religious tradition: its exhortation to fight had always been interpreted in metaphorical terms. In the peculiar situation of early 1642, however, with a real war impending, the sermon was read as an instigation to resist the king, the mighty "par excellence". Later, in the course of the war, some parliamentary soldiers would refer to this sermon as aiding their decision to side with the Houses.[520]

As has already been remarked by historians, *Meroz Cursed* seems to exhibit to the utmost the ruthless tone and relish for violence so often characterising militant sermons.[521] Marshall, commenting on the curse inflicted by God on the city of Meroz for not coming to His aid, had declared that "the Lord acknowledges no neuters". Those who fight for him are blessed, those who withdraw themselves are cursed: they are reckoned as passive enemies. The preacher specifies that men are blessed by God when they imbrue their hands in the blood of God's enemies, even the blood of women and children. Those, on the contrary, who for a misunderstood compassion refrain from doing so are cursed; even threatened with the same destruction as God's enemies. The picture which comes out is that of a bloodthirsty, vengeful type of religion, which meticulously applies the principle "an eye for an eye".[522]

Yet this aspect, though representing a relevant component of the sermon, does not exhaust its message. To begin with, other passages in the text repeatedly mention different ways of supporting God's cause,

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520 Collinson, *Birthpangs*, pp. 127-128; Sheils, "Provincial Preaching", in Fletcher & Roberts, pp. 301-302; cf. also below, pp. 292-293.

521 Trevor-Roper, *Religion*, pp. 307-308; Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, pp. 63-64; Hill, *Antichrist*, p. 81.

522 Marshall, *Meroz Cursed*, pp. 6, 9-12.

from prayer to the relief of the needy.[523] Marshall shifts from one argument to the other without transition, as if he found the two perfectly compatible. He apparently does not feel any contradiction bétween them. Nevertheless, other, less aggressive ways to help God are not excluded.

It is more important, however, to analyse the peculiar characters both of the enemies of the Lord and of those who are called to fight them. The enemies are *tout court* defined as "the mighty", at first without further specification. Later, however, Marshall explains that it is all those individuals or institutions who have power, wealth, learning at their disposal and use them against God and His church. More particularly, it is those who take advantage of their material superiority to oppress, exploit and starve their neighbours - to keep them down. Unlike other puritan preachers, for whom God's enemies were above all false worshippers, Marshall emphasizes more this aspect of maltreating other men. The violence he calls for is a form of rough justice, of cruel revenge; inflicted, however, on people who have severely wronged their neighbours. Even neutrality is censured as a kind of complicity with oppression. This is why God's enemies are called "the mighty": Marshall seems to imply that power is linked to injustice. While he does not straightaway identify one with the other, he argues that the mighty are more easily opposed to God.[524]

God's elect, his church, on the other hand, consist of the little ones of this world: the very people who lie under the tyranny of the mighty. Marshall explains that there is a mystic link between the Lord and them, so that He reckons any wrong done to them as done against Himself. In this case the preacher puts aside the Old Testament and quotes the well-

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523 ibid, pp. 38-49.

524 ibid, pp. 7-8, 22-23; Trevor-Roper, *Religion,* pp. 307-308; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* p. 69.

known passage on the final Judgement (Matthew, XXV, 33). Here Christ says: "any thing you do to one of these little ones, you do it to me".

God therefore seems to identify Himself with those who are below, the poor, the servants and all types of outcasts; people who, according to human criteria, are "the off-scouring of the world". Here Marshall seems to appeal to the lower classes: emphasising their spiritual dignity, he implicitly vindicates their worth on the social level as well. He seems to think that the godly are more easily found among them. This concept has a relevant place in Marshall's thought.[525] *Meroz Cursed* strikes again the egalitarian note present in so much parliamentary propaganda: God sides with the weaker, as long as their cause is just; he makes them win in spite of all disparity of forces.[526] Close to this is the assertion that any difference, in individual abilities as in social position, has no value in the sight of God. If he has endowed some people with peculiar qualities, it is only in order to have them used to the benefit of the whole christian community. Abilities are not a mark of distinction; they are only necessary instruments to carry out a given commission.[527]

In reference to the attitude of the later New Model movement, finally, it is also significant that it is argued that in the Church nobody can be happy alone. Both happiness and sorrow, and the fate of any person, are deeply linked with those of others, due to the mystical bond which unites them all. Everybody cares for everybody else as for himself.[528] The army was to retain this sense of solidarity, although transferring it to a more secular sphere. Especially at the beginning, the fate of officers will be seen as linked to that of soldiers and vice versa;

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525 Marshall, *Meroz Cursed,* pp. 12-15; Hill, *Antichrist,* pp. 81-82.

526 Marshall, *Meroz Cursed,* pp. 8, 16.

527 ibid, pp. 17, 49.

528 ibid, pp. 19.

and the fate of a single regiment to that of all others. In its appeal to the Navy in June 1647, asking it to join the protest, the movement was to state its readiness to share the condition of all the others, even if miserable.[529]

Simeon Ashe was a leading London Presbyterian minister, parliamentary preacher until 1648 and a regular member of the Assembly of Divines. However, he was also a very committed army chaplain, in the regiment of Lord Mandeville, later included in Manchester's corps. He remained in the army until July 1645, when he returned to his parish. Like other chaplains, he also sent newsletters and military reports to Parliament; he took part in councils of war. He was used to encourage soldiers during battles, what shows an educating -propagandist interest on his part.[530]

In May 1642, on the eve of the civil war, Ashe preached a sermon before the London City Militia, which had started to organize the defence of the City. The occasion was a thanksgiving day called by the Common Council because the Militia had not suffered losses until then. Ashe was not a chaplain yet, but had been asked to preach on that day. As he was addressing soldiers, getting ready to go to war, he looked for an appropriate theme for his sermon. As William Bridge did in the same period, he chose the exhortation of Psalm 31 (24), to "be of good courage" in the name of the Lord.[531] The sermon is imbued with a martial tone. There is a continuous connection between the Christian and the soldier, following the English protestant tradition. The struggle of the believer against the devil and his temptations is paralleled to actual combat: in both cases it is a matter of suffering without bending. Ashe

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529 *C.P.,* I, pp.87-88; Clarendon MSS, vol. 29, fo 2522 (May 31, 1647); "A Copie of a Letter" in Wolfe (ed) M*anifestoes, pp. 152,153.*

530 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 92; Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament,* p. 114.

531 Bridge, *Sermon,* Titlepage.

insists on courage as the mark of a true man, while a man without it is a shameful figure, who may even incur divine punishment. At the same time, courage is also the hallmark of a Christian. As Burroughs was to do,[532] Ashe calls God "the Lord of Hosts, Lord Generall of all the forces in the world"; repeating a definition by St. Paul, Jesus is called " the captain of the Lord of Hosts". All Christians are called to be soldiers, both in a metaphorical and in a literal sense.[533] Of course, the courage of a Christian is different from that of heathens; although the latter, too, had something good in it. However, believers must use courage only for an end wanted by God.[534]

The religious-military dimension is clearly predominant. Direct political references, on the contrary, are very rare, and all in accordance with Parliament's professed objectives. The war has been provoked by the seditious action of a few wicked men, who have artfully stirred up division between the king and his subjects. The cause parliamentary soldiers fight for is "the glory of God" and "the welfare of his church"; but also "the honour of the king". They serve, in so fighting, both God and the sovereign, besides Parliament and their country. The true protestant religion, that the soldiers are defending, is perfectly compatible with the honour of the king: the only real enemy here is popery.[535]

However, at one point of his speech, Ashe mentions a different danger: that Parliament might be dissolved by force. In fact, it had been the king that had tried to arrest five Parliament members, a few months before. Later, in enumerating the objectives of the war, the preacher now includes "our rights by Law": the rights of the subjects, as important as

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532 Cf. the title of his sermon, *The Glorious Name of God, The Lord of Hosts.*

533 Ashe, *Good Courage,* pp. 2, 8.

534 ibid, pp. 4, 15-17.

535 ibid, pp. 12, 19, 21, 23, 27, 32.

the honour of the king and the privileges of Parliament. For the people to lose these liberties, and become "inslaved", is seen as a great evil, inferior only to the corruption of religion.[536] The defence of protestant faith itself against the threat of popery concerns not only its inner purity, but also the right of believers to practise it. It is important that Christians be able to enjoy "the liberty of the Gospel ordinances", to fulfil them, as they want[537]. Certainly Ashe does not acknowledge an equal liberty for "papists" to practise their religion privately. However, in his view, the full freedom to profess the protestant religion matters as much as its orthodox character.

Besides, as often happens with parliamentary propaganda, it is sometimes the specifically religious arguments that provide interesting clues also from a political point of view. In recalling examples of Christian courage, taken from the Scriptures, Ashe indirectly tackles three other issues. One is disobedience to established authority for conscience's sake. The second is the strength given by God's support, which is superior to, and enables people to face successfully, any human power. The third is liberation from one's condition of oppression as the goal of one's struggle. Concerning the last, it is God who actually effects it; always, however, as a result of a request of the oppressed. The word "liberation" recurs more than once in the sermon, as the assured final goal of parliamentary soldiers; and as a sound reason to accept the ordeal of the war.[538] It is something God has already partly granted, but must still be completed: there are more chains to be broken, before the English subjects can really be free.[539]

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536 ibid, p. 28.

537 ibid, pp. 28, 33.

538 ibid, pp. 20, 26, 34.

539 ibid, pp. 23-24.

Of course, the liberty here advocated refers to the profession of a "pure" religion. Nonetheless, it is something the people have not had been granted yet, and that they have to claim. The most significant example on this matter is Moses' plea before the Pharaoh, to "let Israel's people go". Ashe underlines that Moses will never cease asking for their liberation, he will never tire, until he has obtained it.[540] It is both an exhortation to carry on the struggle to the finish and an assurance that there will be a time when liberation is won, unlikely as this may now seem. God's support will make it possible. On this subject, Ashe mentions the case of the mighty army of the Assyrian king: although much stronger than Israel's, it was put to rout by God's intervention.[541] Perhaps it is no accident that the preacher mentions a king who is defeated. It is true that it is a foreign king, withstood by the Jewish monarch Hezekiah: however the latter himself admits the poorness of his forces. This king bears a greater resemblance to the English Parliament than to Charles I. The same principle, although in a more general way, is applied in the case of David and Goliath.[542]

The issue of civil disobedience is, perhaps not consciously, raised by Ashe when recalling the examples of the martyrs of faith, also taken from the Bible (Daniel in the den of the lions, the three Jews in the furnace, St. Paul imprisoned by the Romans). All of them wanted to preserve their faith in its purity, or teach it to others. In pursuit of this superior end, they refused in practice to obey the commands of the established authority they were under. Ashe stresses their resolution in denying just what was demanded by the then ruler, because it was evil in the eyes of God. Conversely, he also recalls their firmness in preaching

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540 ibid, p. 20.

541 ibid, pp. 25-26.

542 ibid, pp. 35-36.

the Gospel when it had been forbidden to them, because they had been required by God to do so.[543] The soldiers who practised lay preaching in spite of Parliament's ban, from 1645 on, may have remembered these examples.

Finally, Ashe attaches great importance to a clear consciousness, in the soldier, of the nature of his commitment. He must always refer to the Scripture, in examining the reasons for the work he has been called to. He has to make sure that the cause he is defending is really God's. Otherwise, he will never be able to fight well, because at the crucial moment courage will leave him.[544] It is true that Ashe takes it for granted that the parliamentary cause is just beyond doubt. It is this conviction that he wants to see absorbed by the soldiers. However, it is also true that he urges them to "keep their conscience cleare", not to "make breaches upon their conscience", "not to go against their light".[545] The light of conscience is superior to any order from without: even, implicitly, if coming from Parliament.

It is even more interesting that Ashe exhorts the soldiers to discuss together often; to meet to consider, together, how to strengthen their courage, their decision to fight for God. He also invites them to recall together their past positive experiences, the "liberations" and "mercies" already obtained.[546] The New Model soldiers, as we shall see, would put this proposal into practice, even before March 1647. When they met, however, it was not only to give courage to each other or rejoice in the successes already obtained. It was first of all to analyse the problems still

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543 ibid, pp. 20-21, 32.

544 Ashe, *Good Courage,* pp. 25-26.

545 ibid, pp. 33, 34.

546 ibid, pp. 30, 34.

unsolved, in the church as in the state.[547] However, the habit of "discussing together often" had already been suggested by some of their preachers.

Another interesting sermon, from the point of view of the raising of a political consciousness among soldiers, is one preached by Thomas Palmer to Essex's army in 1644.[548] Palmer, a minister from 1635, had enlisted after the outbreak of the war in the parliamentary army, reaching the rank of major. At the same time, he performed the task of military chaplain, in Skippon's regiment. At the end of 1644 he left the army.[549] Palmer was a Presbyterian, but with millenarian tendencies. He combined the traditional Calvinist predestinarianism with the utopian vision of "new heaven and new earth", of a "new Jerusalem" near at hand in England.

At first sight, predestinarian views seem to be predominant in the sermon. Palmer reminds his listeners that God has made a covenant with Abraham and his offspring, promising them an inheritance in this world. Such an inheritance has been given only to his descendants; and not to all, but to an élite among them, "those who are Christ's", his elect. All sorts of "glorious privileges" belong to them: not only those specific to the church (baptism and other sacraments); but also others, which concern the enjoyment of earthly goods. Even the latter is impossible for reprobates, for whom any good is turned into something harmful. All gifts men receive from God are granted them not as members of mankind, but only as members of the true church. From this point of view, God apparently does make "difference of persons".[550] As a

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547 Cf. below, p. 265.

548 *The Saints Support in These Sad Times* (1644) BL, E 13 (2).

549 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* pp. 9, 161; *BDBR,* III , p. 4.

550 Palmer, *Saints Support,* pp. 14-18.

consequence, the advent of the reign of God is interpreted as a kind of purge, in which only a limited number of elect will be preserved from the doom which will befall all the others. The conclusion is that the kingdom of God is restricted to saints only; the wicked are just used by Him to benefit saints without knowing it, in the final result; after which they are destroyed forever.[551]

Such a doctrine would undoubtedly have an influence on the New Model army, in the later phase of the movement. Its members came to see themselves as the elect to whom God has decided to entrust his kingdom on earth. In 1648-9, this conviction was to pave the way for Pride's Purge and the establishment of a military dictatorship.[552]

However, Palmer's discourse also follows different directions. He starts from a general observation: on this earth the wicked often prosper, while the godly suffer and are defeated. Such a remark, applied to the contemporary situation of England, referred to the many victories of the royalists over the parliamentary army. Since, according to the Calvinist tradition, worldly success was a mark of divine favour, the doubt could arise that Parliament's followers were the reprobates – perhaps still more so because they seemed to be guilty of rebellion against their lawful sovereign. Palmer forcefully denies such a possibility, declaring that the "godly" character of the parliamentary cause is so self-evident that anybody may verify it. The godly are those who follow God's commands, who "know Him so as to heare His voice", like the flock in the Gospel's parable. They are able to discriminate God's true voice from the voices of men: they acknowledge God and not other men as the authentic foundation of authority. This does not mean that they are not willing to obey a worldly ruler, but their obedience depends on a personal

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551 ibid, pp. 20-21.

552 On this subject, cf. D. Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (London 1971); I. Gentles, "The Struggle for London in the Second Civil War", *H.J.*, XXVI (1983) pp. 300-304.

judgement about the order received, in reference to the word of God. As a result, parliamentary disobedience to the king becomes a mark of adherence to God's word.[553]

The ungodly, on the contrary, are those who listen to their own will only, even in religious matters. The target of the polemic here is Charles I, although not explicitly named. He had refused to carry out the reformation of the church, requested of him by many in the name of the Lord, because "he will not Reforme further than he pleases". The godly can also be recognized by their willingness to protect the people of God, who are their brethren. The sovereign, on the contrary, has even hired foreign "expert murderers" (the Irish rebels) to destroy his very subjects.[554] Here, the king is openly accused of harming the people he is supposed to protect. Palmer is aware of the gravity of this accusation: he says he feels embarrassed in exposing the sins of the king under the eyes of the world. However, even this is an indirect confirmation of his charge. Moreover, the chaplain believes that it is his moral duty, as God's minister, to denounce evil wherever it can be found: even in the head of the state.[555]

The present success of the king's armies does not mean that they are right. The temporary triumph of the wicked is part of the plan of God: as we have seen, He makes use of them, even making them victorious for a long time, to reach His superior ends. Palmer, like the author of the *Souldiers Pocket Bible,* an almost contemporary tract, is convinced that Parliament's defeats have the purpose of making them atone for their sins. Defeats also try their faith or bend their pride. Even then, however, they are still God's people, while their enemies are His enemies. The

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553 Palmer, *Saints Support,* p. 12.

554 ibid, p. 13.

555 ibid, passim.

former may suffer for what may seem to them a long time; but in the end they will be saved. The latter may temporarily appear as the winners, but their final destiny is always perdition, because their goals and those of God are incompatible. He wants only to rebuke His people, while His enemies aim to destroy them.[556] This, expressed through a religious metaphor, is an exhortation to parliamentary soldiers, an encouragement not to give up, even if their condition seems desperate. They have to accept the possibility of being defeated and punished by the winning party. The latter are anyway the forces of evil, and they are fighting the church of God. As a consequence, resisting them means supporting the true church, and becomes the duty of a Christian. Moreover, even when outwardly suffering, Christ's followers will always enjoy the protection of God, who will annul their pain.[557] Palmer makes it clear enough who he is referring to: "persecuting kings" or " monarchies". Not only some individuals, then, but a type of government, which persecutes those under its rule who are also God's elect. The final reward the latter will gain is, specifically, deliverance from that persecution. Of course, both the one and the other have a mainly religious character. However, they tend to put the saints in the condition of an oppressed people trying to set themselves free. The final lot of the church is to be delivered: this is repeated over and over in the conclusion of the sermon.[558] Furthermore, such a deliverance is to be granted to people who, although elect and children of God, are contemptible in the eyes of the world. They are accounted "as the filth of the earth", while their enemies have all worldly power on their side[559]. Here Palmer, like Marshall in *Meroz Cursed*,

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556 ibid, pp. 1-11, 20-22; [E. Calamy Sr] *The Souldiers Pocket Bible*, pp. 7-10.

557 Palmer, *Saints Support,* pp. 36-38.

558 ibid, pp. 42-44.

559 ibid, pp. 39-41, 43.

seems to appeal to the lower orders as the elect chosen by God, against the ruling classes.

Although this is essentially a "militant" sermon, reforming tendencies are also present. The mission of the godly, violently opposed by the king, is to refashion the church according to the word of God. There is no direct reference, however, to reform in the state. However, the latter is implied in the call for a different relation between rulers and ruled. The rulers' authority has been challenged, while the ruled have been granted autonomy of judgement on the government's proceedings.

In early 1645, while the New Model army was being raised, the same themes - the parliamentary cause as God's cause, the right and duty to resist an antichristian authority - were taken on again by John Eachard. He was minister of Darsham, in Suffolk, and therefore not an army chaplain. In 1645, however, he published in print a sermon addressed "to all Christian souldiers", that is to say the parliamentary ones, those who fought Papists and Irish rebels.[560]

Like Palmer, Eachard clearly distinguishes between Christ's followers and those of Antichrist, enemies of the Gospel and of the reform of the church. However, unlike Palmer, he does not talk of elect and reprobate. He is interested not so much in highlighting Parliament's followers' spiritual superiority as in pointing out their duty: fighting the forces of evil. Unlike Palmer, then, Eachard does not explicitly mention Charles I. However, in beginning his discourse he hints at a "great Prince" against whom God protects his people. He calls him "the Prince of this world" and predicts that he will be chased out of the Church of England. It seems a symbolic reference to the devil. However, at the same time, in mentioning Satan he could symbolically hint at the king.[561] Here again, as in Palmer's sermon, soldiers are urged not to let

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560 Eachard, *Good News,* Contents, 2nd page.

561 ibid, pp. 1-3.

themselves be discouraged or awed by the material strength of the enemy. It is certainly a formidable power, in arms, equipment and other resources. However, it is all they have, a purely worldly armour, which the spiritual strength of God makes void. The Lord sides with Parliament's soldiers, who fight for true religion.[562]

Yet other consequences stem from the godly character of the parliamentary army: consequences which affect the role of soldiers both within and without the army. The struggle against Antichrist must not be carried out on a military level only. The specifically religious dimension of testifying to God's word is even more important: " Now shall Antichrist be cast out of the Church of England; not so much by the sword, as by the word preached. For where the death of Christ is preached the Devil must needs be cast out".[563] This appeal would be eagerly received by some of the New Model members, who were to start preaching on their own initiative, performing functions traditionally assigned to clergymen only.

Eachard, like Ashe, also reminds Christian soldiers that they have to listen to God's advice before going to battle: the example of David is emphasised.[564] We have already seen that religious exercises, in order to "seek God", were very frequent on the eve of combat. The objective of both military and church authorities was to keep firm among the troops the conviction of being guided by God in every action. However, in this way they encouraged soldiers to think over their proceedings, to submit them to God's judgement to be sure of His approval. As a result, participation in combat lost its character of mere performance of an assigned task. It became an active assent, resulting to some extent from personal reflection and decision.

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562 ibid, pp. 5-6, 15-16.

563 ibid, p. 3. See also on pp. 16, 18, 27.

564 J. Eachard, *Good News,* pp. 8, 26.

Eachard, like Ashe, makes explicit what was only implied in the practice of religious exercises. He urges soldiers never to act mechanically, but to search, in the light of God's word, for the real significance of their actions. Like Ashe, he is convinced that only a moral assurance enables a soldier to fight effectively. However, it takes it less for granted than Ashe that the parliamentary army is right anyway. He insists much more on the need for combatants to subject their action to a continuous scrutiny. It is not only a matter of knowing how to behave in battle, but also of examining the justifiability of the battle itself[565].

Moreover, the Christian soldier must be able to discriminate for himself between the true religion and the false. It is not enough that those who have authority over him claim to defend true religion. Even the king and his party claimed this role. Therefore Eachard warns soldiers against a merely passive, "neutral" attitude towards what is said by public authorities: "He that would overcome the Devill, *and all his Instruments of the world* [my italics] he must not be a blind souldier...you must....walk by the Spirit, fight by the Spirit, by the directions of the Oracle of God's word".[566] However, the Spirit does not talk manifestly. It addresses the soul, and has to be interpreted on the basis of the thoughts and feelings that prayer has produced in the soul. Such an interpretation is a prerogative of the individual, with no outward intervention; not even from religious authorities.

We have seen at the beginning that Eachard identifies the parliamentary army with the followers of Christ, the saints who fight against the Beast. This godly character of the army also implies that every member of it, from the general to the rank and file, is invested with the highest dignity. From a religious point of view, there is no difference between high and low ranks. Such a concept must have affected the

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565 ibid, p. 26.

566 ibid, p. 8.

opinion that even common soldiers had of themselves. It may have helped to undermine distinctions of rank within the army. This would help to explain the self assurance with which the agitators who spoke addressed the commanders at Reading and Putney and unknown common soldiers addressed the whole convention of officers at Saffron Walden.[567]

As in *The Saints Support*, here too it is stressed that the struggle against Antichrist is hard, and may entail heavy ordeals for the godly. At the same time, however, not only is it certain that the latter will overcome in the end; but they can trust in God's assistance at any moment, even now. He is the one who frees from oppression, who opens the jail door. Even when He apparently does not intervene, leaving believers at the mercy of their enemies, the former must not worry. Their defeat in this world will be their triumph in heaven; in spite of appearances, even now it is their adversaries who are really losing. Their end is to force the just to renounce true faith: if, however, the latter keep firm in proclaiming it, this end is not achieved. Moreover, God's enemies hope, in putting to death true Christians, to destroy their community, preventing others from converting. Nevertheless, the testimony given by Christians in martyrdom produces even more conversions than preaching. Persecutors therefore, mighty though they may seem, fail twice. Martyrdom itself, as a testimony of faith in God's salvation, is sufficient to overcome the forces of evil: Satan, but also " temporall enemies".[568]

Although the argument is developed mainly in religious terms, political implications are clear enough. Reference is made to persecutors who have power to imprison and sentence to death. Besides, a relatively recent historical precedent is recalled, mentioning the protestant martyrs of Mary Tudor's reign. The message which is communicated is that

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567 Cf above, pp. 45, 55.

568 ibid, pp. 11-12, 25, 26.

rulers, despite having so many coercive powers at their disposal are not necessarily able to obtain what they want. Withstanding them is possible and, indeed, can be successful, even if tried with the help of a seemingly inadequate force. It is an indirect answer and reassurance to all those who, like the earl of Manchester, feared that they would all be hanged at the first defeat.

Christopher Love was a regimental chaplain in Windsor Castle garrison, from 1642 to May 1645. Before the war, as a minister, he had opposed Laud's regime in the church: he had refused ordination from his bishop, and preached against ecclesiastical canons. For this reason he had been imprisoned. Love, therefore, was strongly committed on an ideological level, and very aware of the need to instruct the soldiers. While he was in the garrison, he often stopped to talk to the soldiers on watch, encouraging them to attend sermons and read the Bible. He even offered them money to spur them to listen to his advice. However, he did not confine himself to this rather mechanical method of education. He also discussed religious matters with them, trying to persuade them but accepting confrontation.[569]

In January 1645, Love preached at Uxbridge, on the occasion of the opening of the treaty between Parliament's and the king's commissioners. This sermon is not addressed to the army. However, the ideas he expressed in it probably differed little from what he was teaching to the soldiers in that period. Love's purpose in his sermon, *England's Distemper,* is to warn all those, both in Parliament and among the wider public, who would be inclined to reach an agreement at all costs. He acknowledges that putting an end to the war is important. However, as long as the political and religious situation which have made it break out remains unaltered, any peace obtained will be illusory. Accepting peace at all costs, especially sacrificing essential religious

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569 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 149.

principles, is a wrong solution. Peace cannot exist separately from justice, and vice versa. The title-page of the printed version of the sermon quotes Psalm 120: "I am for peace but when I speak they are for war"; together with St Augustine on the same subject.[570]

Love's sermon aroused a great stir, especially in royalist milieux. His argument was interpreted as advocating war to the death. The king's commissioners denounced Love to the House of Lords, for hindering the peace negotiations and tending to discredit the king's person. They requested the Lords to disown the sermon publicly and to arraign the preacher. At first, the House tried to smooth over the difference without involving Love. However, the rigid attitude of the king's delegates forced them to call the preacher to appear before the House, and to imprison him for a few weeks.[571]

Despite this, Love's views in the sermon appear politically more moderate than those of most parliamentary chaplains. He is a staunch advocate of a Presbyterian system in the church, and cannot bear to see it accomplished only partially. He explicitly condemns the doctrine of free will and universal redemption, and indeed the very existence of differing tendencies and opinions within the church, as polluting all English society.[572] At the same time, his insistence on the need for a thorough reformation, creating a church wholly different from what has been conceived until now, gives utopian overtones to his views. He wants to see " the Gospel in power", the government of Christ established on earth without compromise.[573]

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570 Love, *England's Distemper,* titlepage, pp. 4-7, 40-43.

571 *L.J.,* VII, p. 172 (February 1, 1645); Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 128; Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p.149.

572 Love, *England's Distemper,* pp. 17-19, 22-23.

573 ibid, p. 20.

Unlike other preachers, who carry out their discourse on a strictly religious level, Love considers the political sphere as well. He is more precise and concrete in explaining the evil that rulers may commit, or make others commit. Other chaplains, such as Simeon Ashe and Stephen Marshall, had given examples, but these always referred to the history of Israel, not the present situation of the English people.[574] Love, on the contrary, mentions his contemporaries: in particular the supporters of absolute monarchy, who have lifted the Crown to excessive heights, thereby discrediting it. They have granted to the king every right to the estates, freedom and even the lives of his subjects. At the same time, they have censured any reaction of self defence on the part of the latter.[575] Love declares armed resistance by subjects against established authorities to be lawful, when the latter threaten their lives or rights. Only by recognizing such a right will it be possible to set limits to the arbitrary, capricious will of one.

Immediately afterwards, however, Love opposes to this tyrannical power the positive authority of Parliament and its military chiefs. The latter are compared to physicians and surgeons sent by God to cure the wounds of the country. In order to heal these wounds, it is necessary to follow their prescription, that is to say take up arms in defence of religion, liberties and laws.[576] So after claiming, in principle, the right of resistance as inherent in every subject, the preacher feels the need to rely on an established authority to legitimate the struggle.

The *Souldiers Catechisme* is the standard text of parliamentary propaganda during the civil war. Its author, Robert Ram, had been minister of Spalding, in Lincolnshire, since the beginning of the war. In

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574 S. Marshall, *A Copie of a Letter...* pp. 10-20; for Ashe see above, pp. 182-184.

575 Love, *England's Distemper,* pp. 16-17.

576 ibid, pp. 20-21, 30.

1643, when the royalists threatened Spalding, he had urged the country people to maintain their allegiance to Parliament. For this reason, he was briefly imprisoned when the town was taken, before being relieved by Cromwell's forces. Later, Ram would become chaplain in Colonel Rossiter's regiment in the Lincolnshire forces until the end of the war.[577]

As we have seen, Ram was particularly active in propaganda; even towards the enemy. His *Souldiers Catechisme*, published for the first time in 1644, had gone through seven editions by the end of 1645. It must therefore have achieved a vast popularity among soldiers. This short booklet (less than 30 pages) provides a synthesis of the reasons of those who fight for Parliament, and the duties they are charged with.

Although military matters are also considered, religious-political issues are given more space. Compared to other sermons examined so far, the *Catechisme* is apparently less consistent in its message: its various sections sometimes seem to conflict with each other. This may be due to its more official propaganda character: the need to keep faithful to Parliament's slogans, while introducing bolder views.

In the opening, the objectives of the war against the king's party are stated. They are the same put forth in Parliament's declarations: defence of king and Parliament, of protestant religion etc.[578] The religious motif is, as usual, the most important; it is on this ground that the rights and wrongs of the two parties are analysed. The war seems at first sight to be interpreted in a strictly confessional way, without reference to politics. The faults attributed to the king's followers are mainly religious ones. Royalists are all papists, hidden Jesuits, or "atheists at heart", "the most horrible cursers and blasphemers in the world". Even when different flaws are highlighted, they tend to concern

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577 *BDBR*, III, p. 79; Lawrence, *Army Chaplains*, p. 68.

578 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme*, pp. 2-3, 6.

the sphere of private morality only.[579] What is never discussed, however, is the central element of the royalist choice: allegiance to the king at all costs. The latter is certainly questioned, and limits are set to his power. However, there is a pressing concern to find other sources of authority to refer to. These are ministers,[580] but above all Parliament, which in the end is granted the same absolute character, almost of divine origin, formerly assigned to the king.

The latter is considered the owner of the territories forming his kingdom, but not also its legislator. According to Ram, the laws which regulate the life in the kingdom are made by Parliament, the highest court of justice, and the sovereign himself is bound to obey them. His power, therefore, is considerably reduced, subjected to a constant control by intermediate authorities, whose power and prestige are emphasised. They regulate all aspects of English life, and even the king is to some extent subject to them. As a consequence, Parliament becomes the supreme authority; not to obey it, is to resist the Ordinance of God.[581] The locus of authority has changed, but the principle of the unquestioning obedience due to it remains the same.

Finally, concerning relations within the army, Ram's tract is perfectly in tune with the *Laws and Ordinances of Warre.* Unquestioning obedience is required of subordinates; and a role similar to that attributed by royalists to the king is here ascribed to military superiors. Higher officers are placed at the head of their men by God himself; and, secondly, by the wisdom of the state. Soldiers and inferior officers are bound *in conscience* always to obey them. The motif of conscience is here used with a reversed objective: not to justify voluntary choice but to

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579 ibid, pp. 7-8, 11, 15.

580 ibid, pp. 6, 11.

581 ibid, p. 5.

urge renouncing to choose. Not to obey, in a soldier, is reckoned a sin: the question of the lawfulness of the orders received is never put.[582] If we consider these premises, it does not seem that the *Catechisme* can have had any influence on the political making of the New Model army. The latter apparently took place in spite of, rather than because of, the teaching imparted by Ram. This seems particularly true considering the attitude of the army movement towards superiors, especially in the Spring of 1647.

However, a few decades later, during the Restoration, the royalist John Turner remarked that the *Catechism* had done great harm to the cause of monarchy, and of a well-ordered society.[583] In fact, it must be borne in mind that the main objective of Ram was to reassure parliamentary soldiers about the complete lawfulness of their actions. To reach this objective, he resorted to different devices; even conflicting ones, without perceiving the inherent inconsistency. The easiest device, as we have seen, was to change the centre of supreme authority, replacing monarchy with Parliament. However, Ram cannot have been entirely satisfied with this proceeding. Perhaps he wanted to make use of new arguments, which could not be attacked by traditional criteria of judgement because they started from a different premise. This is why the possible objection that parliamentary soldiers are resisting their lawful sovereign is given different answers.

The first is the official justification of the Houses: the objective of the war is to set the king free from the evil influence of his and England's enemies, his counsellors and so maintain his honour and just prerogatives.[584] Immediately after, however, different reasons are offered,

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582 ibid, pp. 26-27.

583 V. Neuburg, introduction to *The Souldiers Catechisme*, p. 2.

584 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme*, p. 3.

from which it can be inferred that the relief of the sovereign is not the only end. Parliamentary soldiers actually fight against the enemies of Christ, and of a reformed church, rather than the enemies of the king. Spiritual power again prevails, and tends to replace institutional powers, including Parliament. It is then specified that the ends soldiers are fighting for are the same that the sovereign has pledged himself to pursue, in his coronation oath. He, as well as his subjects, is bound by objective rules, independent and not modifiable by his will. The significance of these rules is so self-evident that any member of society can judge whether they are being fulfilled or not. Therefore any member may decide to intervene to defend these principles, if he reckons they have been violated. He does not need the sovereign's approval to do this. On the contrary, if the latter proved to be conniving with violators, withstanding him would not be an act of rebellion, but a fully lawful initiative, even "of good subjects".[585] The possible faults of the sovereign of course concern first of all any action which may undermine true religion, but not only that. Pursuing the ruin of his people is judged nearly as serious.

This argument is developed in greater depth soon after, talking about the limits of the obedience due to one's government. Ram, like other chaplains, starts from St. Paul's letter to the Romans, where he asserts that obedience to superiors is the duty of all Christians. However, Ram argues, such a duty does not apply in two cases. One is when the orders received infringe objective ethical rules; because even according to the Scripture "we are no further to obey man, than may stand with the will of God". The other case is that of commands which may harm those who perform them. In this case, too, "both Nature and grace" allow those involved to protect themselves. Again individual reason (Nature) on one

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585 ibid, pp. 3-4.

side, God's word on the other, replace the will and intentions of worldly powers.[586]

As we have seen, the virtues of a soldier the *Catechism* enumerates are non-political. At the same time, however, it is said that they fight for the reform of religion. Such a statement implies that the army's responsibility goes much farther than just ensuring victory in the field. Soldiers are actually "Instruments of Justice, and the Executioners of God's Judgements", according to Psalm 149 (VII, 9).[587] War, in this perspective, is only a means, the initial "pars destruens", to make possible in a second phase the true end: the reform of the church "root and branch", according to God's word. The *Catechisme* points out to the soldiers the necessary steps of this reform. First of all, church hierarchy must be abolished, as it is "unchristian in nature". Then, the lower clergy, often corrupted and superstitious (because they tend to adopt catholic forms of liturgy) must be reformed from within. Besides, there is some work to carry out in the state as well: bringing to justice the enemies of the true church and of the kingdom; reforming courts of justice, marred by frequent abuses.[588] Since the soldiers are called the executioners of God's justice, such tasks are assigned to them as much as to Parliament.

This message was to be absorbed in depth by the New Model, with all its ambiguities. The soldiers of the movement would certainly take upon themselves the reform of the organization of the state, as their constitutional drafts show.[589] However, they would also accept the more

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586 ibid, p. 5. On the use of the natural law of self-preservation by the army movement cf above, p. 135-136.

587 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme*, pp. 18, 28.

588 ibid, p. 9.

589 "The Heads of the Proposals", "The first Agreement of the People", "The third Agreement of the People", in Gardiner, *Documents,* pp. 316-317, 333-335, 359-371; "The Case of the Army truly Stated", in Haller & Davies, pp. 65-84.

punitive function to "bring the enemies of the state [their political opponents] to justice".[590] In both cases, the initial impulse had come from the very Presbyterian religious propaganda, of which the *Catechisme* is a standard example. Years later Richard Baxter, a minister who was briefly chaplain in the New Model, complained about the claim of even common soldiers to carry out the reform of church and state themselves.[591] However, he was not aware that these tendencies were the result, at least to some extent, of the teaching of his colleagues.

Ram, in the *Catechisme*, goes as far as justifying acts of vandalism against religious images and objects, because of their "idolatrous" character. In Ram's opinion, the demolition of superstitious "popish" relics was part of the work of religious reformation, which parliamentary soldiers were called to.[592] Actually, the preacher was not alone in justifying these initiatives. Cromwell himself, while exerting very strict discipline within his regiment, countenanced tumultuous behaviour, when it was directed against "blasphemous" objects.[593]

The message contained in the *Catechisme* had two main consequences. It gave soldiers the highest sense of their spiritual dignity and ability of judgement. And it made them feel a responsibility towards their forefathers and descendants as well as their contemporaries. "Our children and posterity call upon us to maintain those liberties, and that Gospel, which we received from our forefathers".[594] This message would later be echoed by the army movement, which saw in it a fundamental reason for its action: "Consider what a blott of infamy will lye on you

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590 Cf. above p. 11.

591 R. Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* ed M. Sylvester (London 1696) I, p. 51.

592 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme,* pp.20-22; Firth, *Cromwell's Army,* pp. 329-330.

593 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, I, p. 227.

594 [Ram], *Souldiers Catechisme,* pp. 6, 14.

and us in after ages" remarked the New Model agitators to their fellow - soldiers of Wales, in July 1647 "if we shall sit still in such a time as this, when it will be said by them lying under oppression: 'Our predecessors had a prize in their hands, and an opportunity offered to have freed us from it and have made us happy, but woe to us, through their neglect they have let it slip, and left us in misery' ".[595] In an earlier document, the movement had already underlined the responsibility not to give up a freedom inherited from the forefathers , and which had been preserved until then at the cost of blood.[596] Fairfax too, in a letter to the city during the treaty at Wycombe, stressed the duty for the movement to undertake a reform of the state: not only towards its fellow countrymen but its descendants as well.[597] As we shall see, the theme of one's responsibility towards posterity was a recurring one among parliamentary chaplains.[598] They used it to justify Parliament's resistance against the king. Two years later, the New Model army would make use of the same argument to justify its own resistance against Parliament.

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595 "A Letter of the Agitators into Wales", *C.P.*, I, p. 160.

596 Clarke MSS, vol. 41, fo 18 (2) par. 6.

597 *Weekly Account* n. 28 (July 7-14, 1647) BL, E 398 (11) (Thursday, July 8).

598 Cf. below, pp. 230-231, 255.

Chapter VI: The Role of Preachers. The Constitutional Militants

Besides the strictly militant preachers, there were among parliamentary ministers those who could be called "constitutional" militants. They shared with the former the concern for the overthrow of the old, ungodly order in church and state. Common to both was therefore the justification of the right to resistance even to the supreme authority, if the latter proved to be evil. Nevertheless, the "constitutional" preachers had also more specifically political and juridical concerns. They were more aware of the relation between the condition of believers and the structure of the state they lived in. Therefore, a central theme in their speculation is the relation between rulers and ruled, and the principles which ought to regulate it. The militants referred only to the Scriptures (especially the Old Testament and the Revelation, as we have seen). Theirs was a strictly religious argument. The constitutionals also mentioned concepts like "the law of nature and nations" or the "fundamental law of the land".

As regards the political education of parliamentary armies, the New Model in particular, the most prominent figures are Jeremiah Burroughs and Edward Bowles. The former was not an army chaplain but a parliamentary preacher, and later one of the Dissenting Brethren in the Assembly of Divines. However he addressed to the Earl of Essex, as commander in chief of parliamentary forces, his most famous sermon *The Glorious Name of God: the Lord of Hosts.* Moreover, he refers to the army as the object of his discourse, at least twice.[599]

Edward Bowles was a military chaplain: first in Essex's army (1642) then in the Scottish Army in Northern England and finally in the New Model army, until January 1646. He wrote religious pamphlets, but

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599 Burroughs, *Name of God,* pp. 35, 65 *bis.*

also military reports. In July 1645, together with Hugh Peters, he preached to the army before the attack on Bridgewater.[600] His most interesting tract, in relation to the making of the army movement, is *Plain English*:[601] although not officially signed by Bowles, it is generally attributed to him.[602]

Unlike the majority of parliamentary pamphleteers, Burroughs and Bowles did not confine themselves to justifying resistance against the king. They both envisaged the possibility that Parliament, too, would be drawn into acting against the interest of the people. In this case, the people would be equally justified in opposing Parliament. The same concept is expressed in the collective manifesto *Scripture and Reason.* All these preachers were writing in a very critical moment for parliamentary forces, between the Autumn of 1642 and the Spring of 1643. The king's army had defeated them three times in that Autumn, and seemed likely to overwhelm them completely. In December a treaty between the parties had been started. Many parliamentary followers feared that the Houses, conscious of their weakness, would accept peace on the king's terms. Such fears are reflected in the before-mentioned pamphlets, and help to explain the unusually critical attitude towards Parliament.[603]

Also significant were the principles set forth by another minister, William Bridge, in his contemporary pamphlet *The Wounded Conscience Cured.* Bridge too was a renowned parliamentary preacher; in 1643, like Burroughs, he would come to the fore as one of the Independent

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600 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 101; Hill, *World Turned Upside Down,* p. 48. On Peters cf. below, pp. 234-235.

601 (January 1643) BL, E 84 (42).

602 Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution", p. 655; see also D. Wing, *Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England.... 1641-1700* (New York 1972) I, p. 195.

603 Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution", pp. 659, 663.

members of the Assembly of Divines.[604] His tract, like Bowles', is directed to the English people in general. However, in the very same month he also addressed a sermon to groups of volunteers who were gathering at Norwich and at Great Yarmouth, in Norfolk, where he was the town preacher.[605] William Beech, a minister who preached to the army at the siege of Basing House,[606] seems to be more "militant" than "constitutional": he insistently calls for the utter, merciless destruction of God's enemies. However, in his sermon *More Sulphure for Basing* he also raises issues which will have great relevance in the debate and action of the army movement, in 1647.[607] Stephen Marshall, the preacher of *Meroz Cursed*, imbued with religious zeal and even violence, adopted a more moderate and rational tone a year later, in a constitutional pamphlet titled *The Lawfulness of Parliament's Taking up Defensive Armes.*

At first sight *The Glorious Name of God* seems to display all the marks of a "militant" sermon; combining, as Collinson put it, "religious rhetoric" and "martial enthusiasm".[608] Burroughs describes a warlike spirit as one of God's essential attributes, and service as soldiers as the main end His children are destined for. The initial part of the sermon enumerates the qualities peculiar to a soldier, and urges soldiers to behave worthily. God's enemies are portrayed as cowards, lacking any quality. Towards them Burroughs exhibits a contemptuous hatred, the longing to see them utterly crushed under the saints' feet.[609] He therefore shares the revengeful and bloodthirsty element found in many militant

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604 *DNB*, II p. 1223; *BDBR*, I, p. 99; Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament.* pp. 117, 118.

605 Bridge, *Sermon.*

606 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 98.

607 W. Beech, *More Sulphure for Basing* (September 1645) BL, E 304 (3).

608 Collinson, *Birthpangs*, p. 129.

609 ibid, pp. 18-19.

preachers. However in Burroughs, as in other parliamentary ministers, such a tendency co-exists with a different attitude, of a political, reforming kind. In fact, *The Glorious Name of God* is also a treatise on the relation between governors and governed, and on the rights of the latter in respect to the former.

The war to which Burroughs stirs up Englishmen has a peculiar character, being directed against their lawful sovereign and his army. As a consequence, he must confront the issue of the justifiability of such an act, both from a religious-moral point of view and from a juridical-political one. First of all, Burroughs has to tackle the problem represented by St Paul's statement, in his letter to the Romans (XIII, 5): the highest powers must not be resisted, and those who resist them will be damned. The preacher does not want to deny this principle.[610] At the same time, however, he wants to acknowledge the right of the subjects, under some circumstances, to resist the action of the sovereign. As a consequence, he has to re-define both the concept of authority and the limits within which obedience is required.

Political power, as a way of ordering society, has been established by God for the good of man: therefore it must always be respected. Yet individual rulers are not directly appointed by Him. He leaves the choice to the people each time, confining Himself to confirming it. While authority as such is always just, a particular magistrate can commit evil actions: in this case, his subjects are justified in disobeying him.[611] "God's Anointed", often referred to in Scripture, is not necessarily a king; on the contrary, it can be the people. It is the latter, as "God's Anointed", who must not be touched by the king, not vice versa.[612] It is

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610 ibid, Dedicatory epistle, p. 3.

611 ibid, pp. 28-29; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", p. 23.

612 Burroughs, *Name of God*, pp. 36-39.

true that here, talking of "the people", Burroughs does not mean the undifferentiated mass of the subjects. He is thinking of the "people of God", His church, the small number of His elect. He specifies that they are endowed with a different spirit than all the others, who are base and mean.[613]

In the same treatise, however, there are passages which in practice contradict these statements. To oppose the principle of the absolute power of kings, the preacher argues that Nature (God's work) has not set significant differences between man and man, but has created all "out of the same mold". Therefore nobody can exert his power over any other but by their consent, on the basis of an agreement, and for the purpose of their benefit.[614] The laws of God, and of Nature, teach all creatures to defend themselves against anyone who aims to harm them; this is even more valid for men. Subjects possess this right of self-preservation as much as the king possesses his prerogatives.[615]

Here the laws of God and Nature intervene to nullify any regulation based on positive law, or historical tradition: from the right of conquest to dynastic right. As regards the former Burroughs, like Bridge later,[616] argues that imposition by force is a matter of fact, which has nothing to do with law and ethics, on which political authority is based. Whoever forces himself on his subjects in this way, can expect justified violent resistance, on the grounds of the law of self-preservation.[617]

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613 ibid, p. 72 bis.

614 ibid, p. 70; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", pp. 19, 20.

615 Burroughs, *Name of God,* p. 27.

616 Cf. below, pp. 217-218.

617 Burroughs, *Name of God,* pp. 39, 129; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", pp. 20, 22.

Now the reasons for God's interest in war can be better understood. In another passage of the treatise, Burroughs apparently contradicts himself, declaring that God wants men to live as "children of peace".[618] However peace, in the Scripture, is never an isolated concept: it is always linked together with terms like "truth", "sanctity", "justice". The last has a particular weight. Peace is not really established, as long as the rights of a part of society are trampled upon. If the conditions for peace imply accepting that someone continues to be damaged, it is not a true peace. Those who suffer violence or injustice do not live in peace. Undoubtedly war too involves violence, and suffering: however it is the suffering of those who resist, who want to overcome, to put an end to pain. It is still an evil, but a temporary one, carrying the prospect of a future good.[619]

The power pertaining to the people is not restricted to the choice of rulers: it extends to the form of government or regime. It is the collectivity who decides both the extent of the power of leaders and the limits within which it can be exerted. God has not given any instruction on which and how many men must rule on a given society: this implies that, if it were so decided, the government of a society could be equally shared amongst all.[620] Here Burroughs seems to outline a kind of direct democracy: something very close to what was to be realised in the New Model army in the Spring of 1647. Such a project is consistent with what the preacher formerly said about the essentially equal nature of all men.

It is true that, earlier, he had also warned that established authorities must be at least passively accepted, if the fundamental law of one's country does not contemplate ways to resist. Such a passive

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618 Burroughs, *Name of God,* p. 55.

619 ibid, pp. 61-62.

620 ibid, pp. 127-128.

obedience had been defined as a duty for all Christians, with reference to St Paul's injunction.[621] On the other hand, if there are no limitations in the law to the sovereign's power, it means that the people have decided, for exigencies of their own, to do without them.

However, this admonition to accept passively even unjust laws is directed to the individual, who cannot impose himself on the rest of society. But the collectivity, or even part of it, can decide to withdraw the powers conferred. The initiative can be taken even by a minority, as long as its action is not explicitly disowned by the rest of the people; and as long as the people have really had the opportunity to express their disagreement.[622]

In England, the power of law-making has been entrusted to Parliament, the representative of the people, by agreement with the sovereign. Almost all citizens, from the nobility to the gentry to small free-holders, concur in the election of this assembly. In this way they participate, although indirectly, in the government of the state, regardless of their social position.[623] While many citizens participate in the choice of Parliament members, the right to discuss and approve laws pertains only to the latter. Burroughs acknowledges that their power in their sphere is superior even to that of the church. Yet such a power is not as absolute as it appears. Parliament members always have to take care not to act contrary to the fundamental principles of the original agreement, on which basis the state was constituted. Parliament publicly interprets the law: however, in a more silent and private way, every citizen is authorised to do so too.[624] These premises lead Burroughs, like Bowles

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621 ibid, pp. 41, 112-113.

622 ibid, pp. 47-49, 135-136.

623 ibid, pp. 50-53.

624 Burroughs, *Name of God*, pp. 138-139.

and the authors of *Scripture and Reason*, to admit the possibility that subjects may resist Parliament as well as the king. What really counts is not the kind of authority, but the way in which it operates. If Parliament's action proved to be harmful for the welfare and security of the people, they would be justified in opposing it.

Of course Burroughs does not encourage such a course on an everyday basis: he allows it only in extreme cases, in relation both to Parliament and to the king. He acutely feels the risk inherent in his position, as giving way to internecine wars and chaos. For resistance to be lawful, there must be a really serious danger to the subjects. Moreover, the people cannot confine themselves to removing the unjust authority: to avoid chaos they have to find another authority to replace it within a reasonable space of time.[625]

Finally, such a freedom of judgement in the individual is extended by the preacher even to the army. Burroughs emphasises that the condition of soldier does not erase the identity either of Christian or of man, free by the law of Nature and the will of God, as well as by the laws of the land. A soldier's obedience must always be weighed against the righteousness and the reasonableness of the order received.[626] His remark that being a soldier does not strip a man of his rights as citizen was to find a wide echo in the army movement of 1647.[627]

As we have seen, *Plain English* was not printed under Bowles' name. However, beside the fact that he is commonly thought to be the author, the tract itself offers some clues. At one point, the anonymous writer describes the condition of the army. He defends parliamentary soldiers from the accusation that they fight poorly, even reluctantly. He

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625 ibid, pp. 131-134; Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution", p. 665.

626 Burroughs, *Name of God*, pp. 73-74.

627 Cf. above, pp. 56-57.

points out all the hardship the army has to endure and complains about the constant lack of pay, which further discourages them.[628] He seems to speak on their behalf, as someone who has been in close contact with them. Even if the pamphlet is not Bowles' work, therefore, it was very probably written by someone linked to the army in some way.

Initially Bowles' tract, also, apparently confirms the hypothesis of the English civil war as a nationalist war of religion, instead of a political-religious revolution. The enemy to be knocked down is for Bowles' popery. Towards this enemy, he is as ruthless as the other militant preachers. He continuously insists on the need to have exemplary justice done on papists, even to take away their leaders' lives. He rejects a negotiated peace because it would allow these "malignants" to escape punishment.[629] Concerning war, he uses the classical argument that waging it is the best way to ensure a lasting peace. Unlike Burroughs, he does not specifically link the lack of peace to a situation of injustice and oppression. The dangers he points to are the spreading of an idolatrous, popish religion, and the subjection of England to a foreign power. The two are closely linked, because the foreign states he fears, Spain and Rome, are catholic. Even the absolutist Stuart government is condemned essentially in that it is a means to establish popery.[630] However, once established, popery could be maintained only by force or through collective deception, the majority of the population being opposed to it. The main character of Catholicism (according to puritans) was to encourage a blind, reasonless adoration, just as absolutism demanded blind obedience. Bowles remarks that "papists", to secure an acceptance of their religion, try to convince the people that the authority of the king

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628 Bowles, *Plain English,* p. 25.

629 ibid, pp. 9, 11, 14-15, 26.

630 ibid, pp. 1-10.

is absolute, given from God. They insist that none of his orders can be challenged: even though they appear to threaten the security of the country, or the principles of one's own conscience.[631]

Bowles' description corresponds to some extent to contemporary royalist propaganda. The latter often reassured subjects that obedience to orders would render them innocent, even when committing wicked actions Popery and absolutism, therefore, for Bowles, reinforce each other. The latter is necessary to establish popery; popery is a means to maintain arbitrary government. On the contrary, "true religion" is always linked to individual freedom and responsibility, as opposed to slavery[632]. It is true that Bowles appears concerned about the threat to the liberty of Parliament, rather than of the English people. However, Parliament is seen as an instrument to guarantee freedom to all; the only safeguard against absolutism.[633]

Bowles acknowledges the authority of the crown, its place in the government of the state. However, he explicitly considers Parliament a superior authority, more important for the safety of the kingdom. The king is just one man, while Parliament is an assembly representing the whole country. Being an individual, the king is more easily prone to follow bad advice.[634] More importantly, even the power he has at his disposal does not belong to him by an inherent right. Neither has it been entrusted to him for the welfare of the people, leaving him the sole judge of what their welfare consist of. The king's power has been conferred on

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631 Bowles, *Plain English,* p. 7.

632 ibid, pp. 6-7.

633 ibid, passim.

634 ibid, pp. 6, 11, 15.

him by the people, with an autonomous decision, and it depends to some extent on their will.[635]

Nevertheless, Bowles is not favourable even to a parliamentary power without limits. Like Burroughs, but with more resolution, he asserts the lawfulness of active resistance by the people against the Houses as well as against the crown. While he praises Parliament as the supreme court of justice and guarantor of liberty and true religion, he still recognises that it can act contrary to the welfare of the people.[636] Bowles presents such a case as a hypothesis *ad absurdo*, which it would be improper to take seriously. However, more than in Burroughs, this specification sounds like a purely conventional phrase. In Bowles' opinion, the authority of both king and Parliament descends from the people, who are the ultimate judges of the proceedings of both. Without the support of the people, even Parliament's power is annulled. The power transferred to Parliament by the people, like that given to the king, is never granted irrevocably: the subjects can always withdraw it if they judge it necessary. Their judgement, moreover, is never dictated by a momentary whim, but always based on sound reasons.[637]

In claiming the justifiability of armed resistance against Parliament itself, Bowles had taken the argument to its logical conclusion. However, for all its theoretical consistency, it could be interpreted by supporters of parliamentary supremacy as weakening Parliament's position. In fact the pamphlet aroused great controversy because of this statement. It provoked three replies within a few months, all maintaining that resistance against the Houses was wrong. One of these pamphlets accused Bowles of seditious propaganda: the same charge usually made

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635 ibid, pp. 14, 20.

636 ibid, pp. 6, 11.

637 ibid, pp. 20-21; Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution", p. 664; B. Manning, *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War* (London 1973) p. 121.

by royalists against Parliament's followers.[638] Another argued that the subjects' duty, in conscience, was to obey Parliament; it also accused *Plain English* of jeopardising the Houses' cause at a critical moment.[639] A third, in discussing Bowles' argument in more depth, highlighted its democratic implications. If the people took back the power they had granted to Parliament, they would have to make decisions directly. However, it would be too difficult to find meeting places for so great a number. Moreover, there would be no more restrictions and even beggars would have a share in decision-making. The author implied that all this was not feasible.[640]

The people seem therefore to play a primary role in the chaplain's thought. Not only do they hold a fundamental right of self-determination: they also, despite not always being aware of it, possess in themselves all the necessary force to make it good against anyone.[641] At this point, however, Bowles seems suddenly to contradict himself, declaring that he is an enemy of "the monster of a democracy". In fact, as he immediately afterwards clarifies, the power subjects retain is just only insofar as it is employed to answer the appeal of Parliament, and fight with it. After stating that the people always act with good reasons, the chaplain seems, on the contrary, to find them lazy, inconstant. They are incapable of noticing danger even when they have it under their eyes. Such an attitude makes Bowles warn against the risk of divine wrath falling on the people.[642] The inconsistency, however, is only apparent. The chaplain alternately praises and reproaches (or admonishes) both subjects and

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638 *An Answer to a Seditious Pamphlet entitled Plain English* (1643) SP116, N° 19.

639 *A Second Plain English,... for the satisfaction of the People* (1643) BL, E 247 (2).

640 Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution", pp. 664-665.

641 Bowles, *Plain English,* p. 25.

642 ibid, p. 26.

Parliament: it all depends on their willingness or unwillingness to fight to advance "true religion". This is the ultimate end, in respect of which both the multitude and the Houses are merely instrumental. At the same time, for Bowles, what is honourable in relation to God also implies the welfare of His people. The happiness of the latter is tightly connected to respect for His honour.[643]

Furthermore, in spite of all his criticisms towards the attitude of the people, the chaplain does not think that they always need to be guided from above. Following Parliament in the war it has undertaken is undoubtedly a duty: yet it is not the only way to contribute to the war effort. Bowles also suggests another one, more independent, self-directed: the creation of a political-military association among the counties. The main cause of the weakness of the masses, which makes them in the end fearful of the war, is lack of unity. Bowles encourages the people to unite their forces, of their own initiative; not just to fill the places prepared for them, in the parliamentary army. Should the latter fail, the association would give it a chance to recover, and to continue the struggle.[644]

For all his dread of the "monster of democracy", Bowles actually appears, among parliamentary pamphleteers, the one who most appreciates the dignity and autonomous strength of the multitude. In spite of his premises, he ends up pointing to a revolution, estranged from constitutional tradition. The latter contemplated a power shared between the crown and the Houses, virtually leaving the subjects out. Bowles, on the contrary, outlines the possibility of a political solution entirely carried out by the people, if necessary against the will of the king and of Parliament.[645]

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643 ibid, p. 10.

644 ibid, pp. 27-28.

645 Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution", p.664.

The Wounded Conscience Cured and the sermon to the Norfolk volunteers, though written by Bridge in the same month, are two quite different works. While the former is a political, constitutional treatise the latter is an occasional speech of mainly military content. Of course, his tone is very martial, closely connecting religion and warfare. God requires all his children, both men and women, to renounce everything on behalf of His cause: not only their goods, but their very liberty and life; even that of the people nearest to them. Women are bound to accept the sacrifice of their sons' lives, of which they should actually be proud. Parents must consider their children as tools to use, even use up to the achievement of God's purposes: they are "arrows in their quivers".[646] It is not here a matter of voluntary choice, although a binding one. Escaping the war is presented as such a shameful act for a man, likening him to a woman, that a choice of this kind is made virtually impossible. Withdrawing from the battle, because frightened by its contact after engaging in it, is even worse. Bridge reminds his hearers the case of that Roman general who had soldiers who ran before the enemy bled to death.[647] Finally the preacher expresses the hope that the adversaries, once defeated, be kept in a condition of permanent subjection,[648] a condition which seems to justify the claim of a right to resistance on their part.

However, at a point of his speech, Bridge confronts the issue of the lawfulness of a war directed against the king. He then makes a distinction between the person of the latter and the political power he represents. Usually, such a distinction had the purpose of saving the principle of authority, while acknowledging that the individual magistrate might err.

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646 Bridge, *Sermon,* pp. 9, 11, 13-14.

647 ibid, p. 14.

648 ibid, p. 17.

Bridge, as we shall see, maintains the same in his treatise on political authority. In the sermon, however, he follows a reversed proceeding: the king as a specific person can never be harmed; but his orders, on some occasion, may be ignored. While it would be unlawful to make war *against* the king, undertaking it *without* his consent can be justified.[649] It is therefore the very concept of supreme authority, always to be complied with, that Bridge is questioning. Moreover, in the sermon are briefly outlined the two somewhat conflicting principles which form the basis of his treatise: the natural right of self-preservation and the police function of Parliament, as a great "serjeant at arms",[650] against public enemies.

In *The Wounded Conscience Cured* Bridge makes a more complex distinction between political authority in general, as a way to organise human society, and the various regimes and rulers. The former is necessary to preserve any collectivity from chaos and violence, and it has been established by God for this end. The latter, on the contrary, are the result of a choice of all the people and can be respectively modified and replaced. Concerning rulers, they can always be removed if they exert their power for other objectives than those for which it was conferred upon them.[651]

On this matter, Bridge rests on the authority of Scripture, in the books of Kings and Judges. It had been the decision of the people of Israel to be ordered by monarchical government, when they asked God "give us a king". David, even after being consecrated king by Samuel, a priest, really became such after all the tribes of Israel had given their approval.[652] Like Burroughs, Bridge rejects authority based on conquest,

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649 ibid, p.17.

650 ibid, pp. 17-18.

651 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 25, 42; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", pp. 17-18.

652 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 4-5.

regardless of any consent from the subjects. He, too, does not believe that political authority can rest on mere military force. Like his fellow-preacher, he is clever in demonstrating that such a principle would, in the end, undermine respect for established authority, the main concern of royalists. If authority stems from force, nothing would ever prevent the present, "lawful" sovereign from being ousted by a stronger claimant to the throne. Moreover, the act of conquest already implies, in itself, an injustice. It is a manifestation of power, and as such it will only give way to other injustices, or a violent reaction from the subjected people.[653]

Nevertheless, Bridge appears much more cautious about leaving the initiative to the multitude. He prefers to entrust it to "inferior magistrates". For Bridge, as for Burroughs and Bowles, the authority of the sovereign comes from the people. However, if the sovereign should use his power against the people, the right to intervene does not pertain to them, but to their representatives. Bridge compares the function of Parliament in such a case to that of a "serjeant at arms", charged with arresting, on the order of the Houses, individuals considered "enemies of the state". Parliament is like a collective serjeant at arms, needed now that the kingdom is under threat not from single traitors, but a whole coalition (papists within and the Irish rebels without).[654] The role that Bridge allots to Parliament, therefore, has a mainly repressive character, and does not include the defence of the right of the people. The multitude is reserved a mere passive role. Bridge specifies that resistance, if undertaken by individual members of society, without some authority, in themselves or entrusted by a state, is unlawful. It would undermine the very foundation of the state, risking a plunge into chaos. The English

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653 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp.27-28; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", p. 33.

654 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 2, 6; Sanderson, "*But the People's Creatures*", pp. 29-30.

people are allowed to fight the king's army because they were called to this task by Parliament. They could not have taken the initiative themselves, harmful as the action of the king and his followers could have been, even concerning the worship of God. Bridge in this respect fully agrees with Calvin, who argued that the private citizen is bound silently to suffer the injustice of which he is victim.[655]

The preacher recalls the example of the early Christians. Despite being strong and numerous enough to oppose the Roman emperors, they had never done so. According to one of them, Tertullius, they believed they had no warrant for such an action. Bridge thinks they were right. Their cause was undoubtedly just: however, this seems unimportant to Bridge, since they were not backed by any authority of their state, even an inferior one (such as the Senate).[656]

Then Bridge examines the objection that other political authorities, besides the king, could forsake their duty to ensure the welfare of the people: in which case the latter would be entitled to remove them, as well. However, unlike Burroughs and Bowles, and despite writing in the same critical period, he disagrees on this point. Parliament, he objects, being a representative body, is less likely than the king to act contrary to the interest of the people. The king, although also approved by the people, is such first of all by hereditary right. Parliament members, on the contrary, are directly chosen by the people. They are known by those who vote for them, who will make sure they elect someone who will protect their interest. Yet there is also another reason: the nature of the power entrusted to Parliament. The latter has been set by the people as the judge and interpreter of the law. Parliament cannot logically be

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655 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 1, 31-32; Sanderson, *But the People's Creatures*, p. 37; about Calvin, cf. Woodhouse, *Puritanism,* pp. 61-62. On Calvin's political thought in general, cf. H. Höpfl, *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority* (Cambridge 1991).

656 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 34-35.

assumed to act against the fundamental laws of the country, simply because it is reserved to it to state what this law consists of. For Bridge the people are by no means the ultimate judges. In the very moment in which they have elected their representatives, they have transferred their power of judgement to them. They are bound always to obey this authority, for conscience's sake. St Paul's rule, in this case, is valid without exception.[657]

It is not even necessary, for Bridge, that an act be declared lawful by the whole body, or at least its majority. Unlike Burroughs, he does not specify that the rest of the assembly should at least have not expressed any explicit disapproval. To make a law effective, it is sufficient that some members of Parliament declare it such; even if others have openly opposed it (as had happened in the case of the Militia Ordinance, rejected by the Lords).[658]

It is true that, for Bridge, Parliament was originally created by the people themselves, as a means of protecting themselves against the abuses of the sovereign and the nobility. However, initially even kings had been established by them, to defend them against bullying by the strongest among them. Bridge acknowledges that kings have often failed to fulfil this obligation.[659] Concerning Parliament members, however, he apparently judges them free from the faults and temptations of the monarch. It seems as if he had transferred to Parliament virtually the same unlimited power he had taken away from the king. The main reason for this is the fear that, all authority failing, everybody would be free to pursue their contrasting aims, plunging society into chaos.[660] It is the

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657 ibid, pp. 42-43.

658 ibid, pp. 45-46.

659 ibid, pp. 11-12.

660 ibid, p. 37.

same fear as that of the royalists, although Bridge finds a different answer to it.

Yet this is not the only message the treatise contains. In parallel the preacher develops, perhaps unconsciously, a potentially antithetic argument. As we have seen, he distinguished the subject as an individual, separated from all the others, and the same as a collectivity, forming the state. The latter was not just the whole body of the subjects, who could, together but autonomously, take the initiative. The collectivity was an abstract entity, actually represented by a governmental body. Elsewhere, however, in the same treatise, a different principle is asserted: that of self-preservation, which, as we have seen, is a principle valid for all human beings and is inherent in the law of Nature, established by God. Therefore it cannot be invalidated by either positive law or historical tradition; not even the fundamental constitution of a country.[661] In this respect, J. Sommerville numbers Bridge among the early contractualist thinkers. They too recognised the universal law of Nature, not the peculiar historical tradition of a state, as the foundation of political action.[662]

Bridge examines the case of a society which chooses its rulers, charging them with coercive power. Such a power, however, has been given in order to secure the better welfare of the subjects. Wherever this function fails, the people are entitled by the law of self-preservation to oppose the power. In this case, Bridge does not mention the sovereign only, but explicitly refers to "any state-officer". Implicitly, therefore, he is also including Parliament. Finally, the right to resistance pertains to individuals as well as organised collectivities.[663]

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661 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 1-2.

662 J. Sommerville, "Oliver Cromwell and English Political Thought", in Morrill, *Cromwell,* p.238.

663 Bridge, *Wounded Conscience,* pp. 1-2, 7.

Bridge then specifies that the power conferred from the people on their governors cannot be compared to a sale, or a gift. In both cases, the transaction once made, the original owner loses any right to the property. Political power is of a different nature: it is an assignment, the granting of a temporary usufruct, for specified purposes. Rulers have the right to the full use of political power, but only as long as they use it for the ends for which it has been entrusted to them. Otherwise the people will withdraw their commission. However, they will not withdraw the *power,* simply because the latter has always remained in their hands. Political power belongs to the people from the beginning, it is inherent to their being a people.[664] As we have seen, the concept of the right of self-preservation will be taken up by the army movement as one of the main justifications for its unauthorised initiatives. As we can see, the treatise expounds somewhat conflicting principles. However, from the point of view of the forming of a political consciousness in the army, it is a fruitful contradiction. It offered soldiers an alternative perspective, beside the official, parliamentary one.

Marshall's pamphlet on the lawfulness of Parliament's war, in 1643, is written, as was common in that period, in the form of a letter to a friend. The preacher wants to rebut some rumours circulating, that he has repented of adhering to Parliament.[665] However, this is probably a pretext to reassert and propagandise the good reasons of the Houses in undertaking the war. Both tone and content of the pamphlet differ from *Meroz Cursed,* the sermon preached a year before. Whereas there he vehemently urged the godly to attack and destroy the mighty enemies of the Lord, here he insists on the defensive character of the conflict.[666]

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664 ibid, pp. 25-26; Hill, *World Turned upside Down,* p. 48.

665 Marshall, *Copie of a Letter,* pp. 1-2.

666 ibid, Title Page, pp. 1, 2, 3.

The point of reference is still Scripture. This time, however, God does not command His people to take revenge on His behalf on the injustice of His enemies. He allows them only to defend themselves from the oppression of the mighty. The nature of the latter and the values to be defended also have a more specifically political character. Formerly, he had maintained that sometimes the Lord requires His elect to imbrue their hands in their enemies' blood. Now, on the contrary, he acknowledges that war, especially a civil war, is a great evil because of the violence and hatred it involves. He even declares that in such a war "whoever wins, all are losers".[667] He still considers it a necessary evil, less bad than the rule of a popish faction.[668] Nevertheless, it is now an evil, not a blessing. While in other ministers the militant and the constitutional side are intermixed, in Marshall they are split into two different works.

The mighty in this case consist of the supreme authority of the state, which the people are authorised to resist when it infringes the liberties guaranteed to them by the law,[669] especially religion. The latter is not seen as an institution, separated from the individual and which he is required to adhere to. It is considered as something inherently belonging to him by right, which can never be taken away.[670] Marshall does not purposefully plead for liberty of conscience. This is not his concern here. On the contrary, he argues that, in a Christian state, enforcement of orthodoxy by law is still necessary because of "Anabaptists".[671] However, considering religion an original fundamental right, inherent to the nature of a human being, in some way implies its being withdrawn

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667 ibid, passim.

668 ibid, passim.

669 ibid, pp. 29-30.

670 ibid, p. 6.

671 ibid, passim.

from subjection to governmental institutions, which belong to the sphere of positive law, traditions etc. Religion, however, is granted "by the laws of God and man" universally; it does not depend on the rules of a particular country.[672]

As to the rest, the principles expounded by Marshall in this tract are the same used by the other constitutional pamphleteers. He discriminates between authority as any form of ordering of society, and the ways in which and the persons through which it is executed. He maintains that subjects are bound by God to obey all the *lawful* commands of their rulers, but not their arbitrary will. He rejects the right of conquest as a ground to enjoin the people's obedience: conquest is not a right, just a matter of fact, which implies the rejection of all laws.[673]

Although these arguments were repeated over and over in this period, the consequences concerning the attitude towards the king are interesting. He is called to account as much as his evil counsellors. Far from believing his good to coincide with that of his subjects, it is conjectured that he may use his power to rob and destroy his people, surrounding himself with "thieves and murderers." Although he is seen as the father of his people, he can do them "the greatest evils".[674] Not only is the role of king stripped of all elements of sanctity, of being "God's anointed", he is actually likened to murderers and robbers. Even when he is a good ruler, he is still a man: he does not have any superiority in nature to others. Therefore he is not above the judgement of other men. Marshall rejects such an alleged superiority in the king as popish.[675] He repeats the simile of the pilot who steers the ship towards

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672 ibid, pp. 3-4, 6.

673 ibid, pp. 3-13.

674 Marshall, *Copie of a Letter,* pp. 8-9.

675 ibid, pp. 8, 17.

the rocks and of the general who points the cannon towards his soldiers. They can lawfully be stopped, not only by inferior officers or councils of war, but by the passengers and soldiers themselves[676]. As we have seen, this simile was to be taken on by the army movement to justify its protest.[677] There is even the same reference to the two rebellions of protestant subjects against a supreme authority which were judged as lawful: the Dutch one against Philip of Spain and that of the Scots in 1640.[678] The simile is repeated later, together with another important assertion: the foundation of political order is in the preservation *of the subjects'* religion, laws and liberty. It lies, in other words, in principles which concern the whole body of the people, not in the coercive power of rulers.[679]

On these grounds, Parliament's war against the king is justified. Marshall maintains that the former has no intention of opposing the latter. Yet he also holds that Parliament's aim is": to compel him to that which it is not fit for a king to yield unto". The result is the same that would be obtained if the king were deposed. In both cases he is deprived of his power, forced to accept the will of an assembly in opposition to his own. Moreover, Marshall, then, underlines that Parliament is not simply an "inferior magistracy:" it is the representative body of the nation, which cannot strip the people of their liberty without being itself stripped of it.[680]

At one point in his discourse, Marshall too seems to contradict himself. Like Bridge, he attributes to Parliament an unquestionable

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676 ibid, pp. 8-9.

677 Cf. above, pp. 136-137.

678 Marshall, *Copie of a Letter,* pp. 8, 11.

679 ibid, p. 21.

680 ibid, pp. 26-28.

authority, as law-maker and ultimate judge of the law: the Houses are free to approve or reject bills. Marshall, like Bridge, refers to the fundamental law of England. He provides Parliament's authority with the same absolute character royalists granted to the king. He argues: "A Parliament of England (like Paul's spiritual man) judgeth all, and itself is judged of none". On these grounds Marshall might consider the initiative of Parliament to start the war as justified, simply because the latter has declared it so.

However, immediately after, he admits that he has not been content with this answer. On the contrary, he has held it his duty "not to yield blind obedience," and accept parliamentary declarations as an act of faith. He has perceived that he had to examine the matter for himself, and then decide where the truth lay. He is well aware that both parties have appealed to God to justify their action.[681] Marshall, therefore, has made his decision using his own judgement. The dangers Parliament has pointed to, in making known its decision to raise an army, find a correspondence in real events. Marshall has found that Parliament's judgement coincided with his own. In reporting to his readers what has happened in the past year, and examining its significance, the preacher offers them his version of the facts. Implicitly, he also gives them the opportunity to make their judgement in their turn. He strongly maintains that, after one year, he has by no means repented of his choice. On the contrary, the righteousness of it is even *clearer* to him.[682] It is clearer also because he has had time to think over it.

A Copie of a Letter is not addressed to the army. However, it was written during Marshall's chaplaincy in Essex's corps. Moreover, Marshall specifies that he wants to give here, in particular, the reasons which have persuaded him to join the parliamentary army. He reckons it

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681 Marshall, *Copie of a Letter,* p. 22.

682 ibid, p. 26.

his duty, as a chaplain, to explain to the soldiers how they have to act to be in accordance with God's word.[683] Therefore, it is likely enough that, when he was with the troops, he expounded the same principles.

Unlike the constitutional preachers considered so far, William Beech did not carry out his propaganda in the early period of the civil war, in a still critical phase for Parliament. At least, his only extant civil war sermon, *More Sulphure for Basing*, is dated September 1645. By this time, the parliamentary forces were clearly winning: the issue of the justifiability of resistance against the sovereign was no longer really relevant. As a consequence, it seemed less necessary to excite in parliamentary soldiers hatred of the enemy or to describe the latter as the incarnation of evil.

However, *More Sulphure for Basing* displays the same bloodthirsty character, the same unrelenting willingness to destroy adversaries as the early militant sermons. Resting on the authority of the Bible, Beech exhorts his hearers not to have any consideration of who the enemy can be: if a fellow countryman, a neighbour, a friend, even a close relative. They must all be utterly destroyed, because they are God's enemies. He always calls His people to take revenge against those who offend Him.[684] The reason for such aggressiveness lies in the occasion. The sermon is preached before the storming of the fortress of Basing House, whose governor and garrison were catholic. Beech recalls the massacre of Protestants by Catholics in Ireland to incite the soldiers to fight without mercy.[685]

As a consequence, the enemy pointed to seems to have a solely religious character. It is "the enemies of God", followers of Antichrist,

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683 ibid, p. 22.

684 Beech, *More Sulphure,* pp. 6, 14, 22-23.

685 ibid, pp. 10, 28.

against the "people of God", his elect. The guilt of God's enemies concerns first of all His worship. They have drawn themselves and tried to draw others into idolatry. In practice the conflict is between the followers of popery and the defenders of protestant religion.[686] At the beginning there is apparently no question of an opposition between the "people of God" and established authorities. On the contrary, it is the Catholics who are called "a rebellious people", who "will not beare the law of the Lord".[687] The king is not an enemy: his English subjects have been robbed of their affection for him by these evil people.[688]

However, as with other parliamentary preachers, Beech's argument is not uniform. While the tone of religious-national fanaticism is clearly prevalent, occasionally a different perspective emerges. Beech asserts that there is a reciprocity of duty between rulers and ruled. The latter are bound to obey the former: according not only to God's will and the constitution of the land, but also to the law of nature. However sovereigns, in their turn, have two main duties: defending true religion and preserving the lives and goods of the subjects. Although Beech does not state it explicitly, he makes the people the ultimate judges of the king's fulfilment of these duties: they decide both if the religious faith they are commanded to observe is the true one, and if they are being adequately protected. If they judge that the sovereign has manifestly forsaken these duties, they are justified in resisting him. Theirs is not a violent, offensive resistance: it is solely the exercise of a right of self-defence.[689]

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686 ibid, pp. 15, 25-27.

687 ibid, pp. 5, 15.

688 ibid, p. 24.

689 Donagan, "Did Ministers Matter?", p. 146.

Beech emphasises the affection of the English people towards the king, but complains that Charles (misled by false aspersions) has acted towards his people like a cruel stepmother, unjustifiably calling them rebels. Beech defends them from the accusation, declaring that the English have always been "observant and dutiful" subjects, as shown by their several "humble petitions".[690] These, in fact, were often protests against some existing authority and reform proposals (at least concerning religion).

Beech reminds his hearers that the people are bound by a covenant with God to protect the person and rights of the king. The people even pledge themselves to prepare the way for his and his posterity's happiness. Nevertheless, this happiness, as well as the dignity of being king, consists in ruling over men, provided with an autonomous reason, not over mere beasts or slaves.[691] Beech seems to imply that, to be a good sovereign, the king should accept different opinions, perhaps even criticism from his subjects.

The preacher admonishes soldiers never to rebel against the orders received, and be content with their pay, whatever it is. Yet, immediately after, he suggests that any act is lawful only if the end it is undertaken for is just.[692] Moreover, like Ashe, Eachard and Burroughs, he specifies that a soldier must be well assured of the righteousness of the cause he is fighting for before undertaking it. This means that he has to examine for himself the reliability of the justifications given for the war. In the end, it is his conscience that will establish whether he is fighting for God and His people or not.[693] Previously, Beech had warned his hearers not to

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690 Beech, *More Sulphure,* p. 24.

691 ibid, pp. 24-25.

692 ibid, p. 22.

693 ibid, pp. 29-30.

trust blindly the opinion even of religious authorities, and learned people in general. Learning does not necessarily mean a commitment to the word of God: the former can sometimes be used against the latter. Jesus, reminds Beech, had little esteem for the doctors of the law.[694]

Moreover, although the motivations of the war are mainly religious, occasionally new reasons come out. As we have seen, the enemies of God are such first of all because of their attitude towards God. However, their attitude towards the people is also blamed. Their sin is idolatry, but injustice as well. Referring to the Old Testament, Beech recalls how the people of Israel were stripped by force of the rights which belonged to them, of a sphere of freedom which was their own. Besides, it was not just a matter of right: there was also a material element. The Jews were dispossessed of all their goods, of their very means of livelihood, driving them to misery. These goods had originally been theirs and therefore still belonged to them, long as they may have been in the possession of their conquerors. As a consequence, the people of Israel were morally entitled to try and get them back, even by force. In this case, force was used to oppose an usurpation, re-establishing justice. It was also a way to escape the oppression of the imposition of a false religion. Such an oppression is the most cruel, because it concerns a primary element of men's life. However, any kind of imposition by violence is an evil; and those who are subjected to it are within their rights in rebelling against it.[695]

Finally, a relevant motif in Beech's sermon is that of collective responsibility towards posterity. This point, also stressed by other chaplains, would be absorbed in depth by the army movement. Beech urges soldiers to defend their rights to ensure not only their own welfare, but that of their offspring. The English people are now at a turning point

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694 ibid, p. 22.

695 ibid, pp. 7, 27.

in their history. They have at their disposal the means necessary to repossess themselves of primary, vital rights which had been taken away from them, rights concerning their freedom as well as religion. Such a favourable situation might never come again. If the people let this opportunity go, they will bear the responsibility of this towards their posterity. The consequences will be the triumph of idolatry and superstition; but also of slavery and poverty. The English will rob their children of their rights and happiness, if they give up fighting for them.[696] In the letter written by the agitators to their fellow soldiers in Wales in June 1647, as we have seen, we find the very same concept, and almost the same wording.[697]

The presence, in the debate among agitators, of motifs similar to those we can find in the preachers' propaganda does not mean, however, a passive absorption on the part of the former. The duty Beech had pointed to soldiers was to preserve the prerogatives of Parliament, which had always protected them against abuses[698]. For the army movement, on the contrary, responsibility towards posterity would imply having to act against some actions and prerogatives of Parliament.

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696 ibid, pp. 23, 28.

697 Cf. above, pp. 201-202.

698 Beech, *More Sulphure,* p. 28.

Chapter VII: The Role of Preachers. The Reformers

The work of the reformer preachers presents itself as distinguished in many respects from that of both the militant and the constitutional ones. The reformers differentiate themselves in their basic religious tendencies, in the message they want to spread and in the objectives they pursue. Concerning reformer preachers, we cannot properly speak of "propaganda", in the sense of incitement to immediate action, carried out on behalf and under commission of Parliament. On the contrary, sometimes the teaching of the reformers appears to be in opposition to the directions of the Houses, insofar as the latter conformed themselves to the decisions of the Assembly of Divines. Their opposition, therefore, is usually not political, but concerns ecclesiastical policy.

Both the militants and the constitutionals, as we have seen, though in a different way, had focused on the need, even the moral duty, to pull down the unjust existing order: in the church (Episcopalian structure) and in the state (absolute monarchy). The main themes these chaplains tackled were, on one hand, the lawfulness of even armed resistance against a government that behaved arbitrarily, towards God or its subjects; on the other, the limits within which political power must be exerted to remain lawful. In the preaching of the reformers, with the exception of Hugh Peters,[699] these themes are virtually absent. This is partly due to the different time of preaching, because most reformers are active between mid-1645 and mid-1646: after Naseby, which definitively marked the superiority of parliamentary forces. However, it is also the personal attitude of the reformers which is different. It is not even just the fact that they are less interested in the "pars destruens" - the elimination of the old order - and more in the "pars costruens", the outlining of a new

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699 Cf. his *Gods Doings and Mans Duty*; *A Worde for the Armie and Two Words to the Kingdome* (1647) BL, E 410 (16).

system, conceived as more just. This aspect is certainly present, but it does not exhaust differences. The reformers are not interested at all in the transformation of the state (apart from Peters, as we said). They mention it only briefly when they complain about persecution against religious dissenters, carried out with the support of the "civil magistrate". The reformers seem interested solely in the transformation of the inner life of the individual, his relationship with God. When they turn their attention to the social, collective dimension, it is only in relation to the church, the community of believers. Both the militant and the constitutional chaplains appear immersed in the reality of their time, with all its problems; although examining the latter from a religious perspective. The reformers, on the contrary, seem to distance themselves from current affairs, from the contingent; therefore, from the political dimension, too.

In this light, they seem less likely to have exercised any influence on the army movement of 1647, whose character and interests was to be markedly political. However, from some points of view, the reformers may have affected the New Model in a deeper way: not in the objectives of its action, which were to reform the state; but in the forms of its organization and its internal relations. As we will see the "true", "spiritual", "invisible" church that the reformers outline has various aspects in common with the system of assembly discussion established in the New Model from the Spring of 1647. An even closer parallel can be traced with the religious exercises in the army and the spirit they were imbued with. Moreover, while the reformer preachers were uninterested in a reform of the state, as regards the church they really envisaged a global transformation, "root and branch". As we will see, they did not simply want to modify, but often tended to utterly abolish any kind of church organization, seen as a purely human construction. The New Model army was to absorb this radical spirit of total reform, applying it, though, to the state rather than the church.

This however was possible because the church, in the reformers' vision, was not simply the venue where religious services took place; a separate sphere, assigned to a specific function. By "church" it was meant the union of all believers, their life in common. It is true that only the spiritual aspects of this life were taken into consideration. However, they did not constitute a separate sphere: on the contrary, they incorporated and characterized all the other aspects of life, including politics. Probably, in the different attitude of the reformer preachers, their peculiar religious position also played a role. Both militants and constitutionals, as we have seen, were orthodox Presbyterians; or, in the most extreme case, religious Independents, like Burroughs or Bridge. The reformers, however, are either clearly separatists of some kind, or Independent but with strong sectarian inclinations.

Hugh Peters was the most mainstream Independent among them. Before the war, he had been minister in Congregationalist churches in Holland (1629-1635) and New England (1635-1641). After the outbreak of the war, he was appointed as chaplain in various regiments in Essex's army, finally getting to the New Model in May 1645.[700] Unlike separatists, he believed in the usefulness of a well functioning church, but with a substantial measure of toleration.[701] The Independent minority within the Assembly of Divines, as we have seen, accepted only a limited toleration, concerning matters of worship and church discipline. They refused it, however, in subjects considered essential, such as doctrine and ethics[702]. Peters' toleration had a much wider scope. He fostered not only a mutual acceptance of differences, but also the broadest possible sharing

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700 H. Peters, "Letters and Documents by or relating to Hugh Peters", ed. R.P. Stearns, *Essex Institute Historical Collection*, LXX (October 1935) pp. 48-49; Stearns, *Strenuous Puritan*, p. 247; D'Ewes, fo.123 (September 20, 1644).

701 Peters, *God's Doings*, pp. 43-44.

702 Cf. above, pp. 110-111.

of each other's experiences. His religious ideal, at least around 1646, was that of an environment in which many different creeds could thrive. His model of religious polity was that of Holland, where Independents, Anabaptists and members of other sects peacefully coexisted.[703]

William Dell and John Saltmarsh, who were chaplains in the New Model army respectively from June 1645 and from January 1646, were both known Independents. Both had an official position within the established church: Dell was rector in Yelden and then Master of Caius College, Cambridge; Saltmarsh held two rectories.[704] However, both tended to depart even from the Independent mainstream in two fundamental points: church order and, again, religious toleration. The Independents, as we have seen, demanded a different, more decentralized organization of the church.[705] Dell and Saltmarsh, however, seemed inclined to abolish any church order at all: any division between clergy and lay believer, and any form of coercion, because both were contrary to the true nature of a church.[706] Concerning toleration, too, they went farther than the "Dissenting brethren". Saltmarsh was convinced that it was possible to find some element of truth in any religious creed: including that of his Presbyterian adversaries. He fully shared, but without their restrictions, the Independent point of view on human limits in the attainment of the whole truth, which belonged only to God.[707] Dell remarked on the radical dissimilarity between the kingdom of God,

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703 Stearns, *Strenuous Puritan,* pp. 266-267.

704 Walker, *William Dell,* p.45; *BDBR*, I, pp. 221-222.

705 Cf. above, p. 108.

706 W. Dell, *The Building, Beauty, Teaching and Establishment of the Truely Christian and Spiritual Church* (1651) BL, E 343 (5), pp. 81, 86; J. Saltmarsh, *The Smoke in the Temple,* in Woodhouse, *Puritanism,* pp. 184-185.

707 J. Saltmarsh, *Free Grace, or the Flowing of Christ's Blood Freely to Sinners* (1645) BL, E 1152 (1) pp. 7-10; Haller, *Word of God,* pp. 22-23.

which the church belongs to, and the world, of which the state is part. Such a dissimilarity, for him, made pointless any imposition of a religious tenet on those who did not share it. The duty of the saints for him was not to force the rest of the world to believe and worship as they did, but to sever any link with it.[708] Peters, Dell and Saltmarsh were, however, still among the more mainstream reformer preachers. The others were outright sectaries.

William Erbury, at the time of his ordination, was reckoned as a moderate Independent. This is why Christopher Love, more strictly Presbyterian but his friend, could secure him a post as chaplain in Skippon's regiment around 1643-1644. In 1646 he was chaplain to Ingoldsby's regiment at Oxford. Very soon, however, he manifested heterodox tendencies, not only concerning church discipline, but the very "fundamentals of faith". He apparently not only rejected the Presbyterian parochial system, but baptism; and was alleged to preach against original sin. He also believed in universal redemption and denied that Christ was God.[709]

Hanserd Knollis was ordained priest in 1629. In that very year, however, he began to have scruples about the rightness of his choice. He disagreed on many points with the anglican liturgy, and had doubts about his personal calling being the true will of God. He more and more distanced himself from a formal profession of religion, consisting in the performance of a number of regulations. He turned towards a more personal, intimate kind of faith, based on his confidence in God's love. At that point he took up preaching again, without waiting for any authorization from his superiors and despite having renounced his former ordination. His spontaneous activity aroused the hostility of local

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708 W. Dell, *Truely Christian Church,* pp. 80, 83.

709 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 124; *L.J.*, VI, p. 470 (March 14, 1644); *BDBR*, I, p. 253.

ecclesiastical authorities, often leading to his arrest. Like other separatists, he took refuge in New England for a few years. When he came back, in 1641, he converted to the Baptist faith and became the leader of a congregation. It is roughly in this period that he entered the parliamentary army.[710]

Francis Cornwell and Henry Denne represent a peculiar case. Neither of them entered the army as an appointed army chaplain; and their position in the church was not regular. Cornwell was a Cambridge graduate, and had probably studied theology, given the knowledge he displays in his pamphlets. However, it is not clear whether he was ever ordained a minister.[711] Denne was a Presbyterian minister, who, during the civil war, became a Baptist and renounced his ordination. In the same period, more or less (1645) he joined the New Model army.[712] Cornwell too joined the army as a soldier, to fight in defence of true religion and the church[713]. These men seemed to combine the two functions of combatants and religious propagandists. Given their dubious position within the church, their activity is apparently in between religious teaching to the army from outside and religious activism within it.

All these preachers, in different ways, had departed from the official church orthodoxy, as it was being set by the Westminster Assembly. Yet none of them seemed aware of this fact. Far from vindicating their heterodoxy, they regarded themselves as orthodox. The fault, the heresy, if anything, lay in the positions of the established

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710 H. Knollis, *The Life and Death of Mr Hanserd Knollis, Written with His Own Hand...* (1692) pp.4, 9-17, 20; Haller, *Rise,* p. 271.

711 F. Cornwell, *The Vindication of the Royal Commission of King Jesus* (1644) BL, E 10 (15); Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* p. 205.

712 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation,* pp. 204-205.

713 Cornwell, *Royal Commission,* Preface, 4th page.

church. They were in the peculiar position of outlaws, outcasts, who claimed to belong to the law and the mainstream.

Sometimes they tried to stress the points they had in common with their adversaries, using their very language and taking the same point of reference (although re-interpreted). Cornwell, in rejecting infants' baptism, a fundamental of Presbyterian orthodox doctrine, recalled the Solemn League and Covenant, the basis of the Presbyterian church. Of course, he isolated the phrase "a reformation according to the word of God", to show that God has never enjoined infant's baptism, but only that of an aware believer.[714] Knollis, accused of unlicensed preaching and heretical doctrine, told the Committee of Examination that he was ready to submit to their judgement, whatever it might be. This does not mean that he was really prepared to obey their injunctions, as his persisting in preaching in spite of the ban showed. However, his attitude towards ecclesiastical authorities betrayed a desire to find common ground, a way to agreement. Like Saltmarsh, he was willing to find some measure of truth even in his adversaries. Moreover, he tried to discover a way in which the official church's truth and his own might coincide. In this respect, the purpose he gave for his preaching is revealing. He wanted "to exhalt Christ", and "press his hearers to a Sanctification in heart and life": the same "edifying" objective that any Presbyterian minister may have had. However, by his highly moral sermon, Knollis aroused such an indignation among his church hearers as to be stoned out of the pulpit.[715]

Other preachers had a more hostile, polemical attitude towards the religious establishment. They directed against it the accusation of heresy and blasphemy: they even likened it to Antichrist. Peters argued, against his Presbyterian opponents, that the real godly, for him, where the very

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714 ibid, pp. 9-10.

715 H. Knollis, *Christ Exalted* (1646) BL, E 284 (14) Titlepage.

same persons the Presbyterians called heretics and schismatics.[716] Dell believed that the true ungodly were the supporters of the old church's traditions and worship: purely human creations, in his opinion, tending to value the knowledge and spirit of the world above divine wisdom, and mere gestures, having no correspondence in the true inclination of the heart.[717] Promoting the end of any hierarchy in the church, of any external form of worship, was simply to expound the plain, clear truth of the Gospel. Those who resisted it, the supposed champions of orthodoxy, were in fact resisting the action of the Spirit, and so opposing God.[718] Erbury observed that "they blaspheme God in them calling them for this blasphemers".[719] The blasphemy in question was that propounded by Erbury, that Christ and his saints shared the same nature, like Father and sons.[720] However, if the believers were really one with Christ, to offend them meant to offend Him, too. So Erbury could accuse his orthodox censurers of blasphemy. Denne considered the church that was then being established in England a member of Antichrist, because it pursued objectives opposed to those of Christ. For Denne the compulsory administration of sacraments (baptism, communion) even to non-believers flatly opposed God's word in the Scripture. Of course, he was instead in favour of dispensing these sacraments only to believers, who had chosen to follow Christ.[721]

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716 Stearns, *Strenuous Puritan,* p. 287.

717 Dell, *Truely Christian Church,* pp. 53-54, 64-67, 87.

718 ibid, p. 54.

719 W. Erbury, *No Truth, Nor Errour, Nor Day, Nor Night* (January 11,1647) BL, E 404 (20), p. 14.

720 Erbury, *No Truth, Nor Errour,* pp. 9-10.

721 H. Denne, *The Man of Sin Discovered* (1645) BL, E 275(1) pp. 3, 15-16, 20-22, 26.

In the New Model army, we shall find the same dichotomy between an objective condition of lawlessness, of challenge to established authority; and a subjective conviction of godly righteousness, even allegiance to Parliament. In justifying its disobedience to Parliament's orders, the army would refer to the principles stated in the declarations of the Houses themselves, during the civil war. However, as we have seen, they would interpret them in a very selective and different way.[722] Moreover, while acting against Parliament's directions, they were to perceive themselves as the true defenders of the liberty of the Gospel, the advancers of the glory of God. They would call on God as witness of the righteousness of their intentions; they would acknowledge Him to have owned their just endeavours, by granting them final success.[723] The attitude of the radical preachers, as well as the puritan and parliamentarian self-defences during the civil war, must have had an influence on the army in this respect. Both in the case of the preachers and in that of the army, I do not think that we can simply explain this attitude as tactical, instrumental. It was - at least also - a deeply rooted conviction. The army revolt destroyed the old order in the name of that very order, with the conviction of interpreting its most authentic sense.

Three subjects, in the teaching of the reformer preachers, may have had a particular influence in the development of the army movement. 1) Their image of a free church, or community of believers, in opposition to official structures, still based on hierarchy and coercion. 2) Their belief, taken from old Puritanism, in the sole, absolute authority of God over the individual believer. 3) At the same time, in apparent conflict, the respect for the freedom of individual conscience.

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722 Cf. above, pp.15-16.

723 *The Petition of the Officers and Soldiers,* March 21, p. 1; *A Remonstrance,* par. 26; "An Agreement of the People", (October 1647) in Gardiner, *Documents,* p. 335; "*A Letter of the Agitators Into Wales", C.P., I,* p. 61.

The church, or community of believers, outlined by the reformers is characterised by a nearly complete absence of leadership and codified rules; and by a high degree of shared experience. Peters' religious ideal, for example, is a church in which different ways of worshipping God could co-exist. He is convinced that a diversity in religious liturgy would not prevent a deeper spiritual unity among believers. He hopes that ministers of different tendencies can be able to pray together. If this is made impossible by too incompatible an interpretation of faith, it would be important to succeed at least in discussing together, without prejudices. It would also be good to try and create occasions of meetings and sharing of experiences, such as having meals together: this would reduce the sense of intellectual estrangement provoked by the difference of creeds.[724]

Cornwell is convinced that God, coming in the world, has instituted a new kind of church, abolishing all the past forms (established by the Jews). He has not only put an end to some aspects of the old church, such as tithes and other compulsory payments, and exterior ceremonies and rites. He has also pulled down the two foundations of any organized church: "temples", or places dedicated to worship; and ordination of ministers.[725] The church conceived by Cornwell is not a structured body, with its own set of rules. It is a spontaneous community, characterised by the sharing of religious and, implicitly, any everyday experience: praying, "breaking the bread" (which could refer to the eucharist but also to a sharing of meals), being together in general.[726] In such a community, there is no distinction between a teaching clergy and

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724 H. Peters, *Mr Peters' Last Report from the English Wars* (August 27, 1646) BL, E 351 (12) p. 6.

725 F. Cornwell, *The New Testament, Ratified with the Blood of the Lord Jesus* (1646) BL, E 516 (1), p. 19.

726 ibid, p. 18.

learning church-goers. The only distinction is between the community and the unbelievers outside it. Except for this everybody, man or woman, is a member of the church on the same level.[727]

Religion, for Erbury, consists in an immediate, intimate relationship between God and the soul of the believer, without passing through any earthly, institutional media (forms of worship, ecclesiastical discipline, theological doctrine taught by the church). Theological doctrines are actually reckoned as a hindrance to an authentic understanding of the mysteries of God, inasmuch as they are part of a purely worldly logic. To be a believer, one needs only a willingness to welcome God in oneself and serve Him. Such a discourse seems to nullify not only organized churches, but any form of community. However, Erbury believes in the imminent coming of the kingdom of Christ on earth, and the establishment of a new life. Only, it is something which still has to take place, not an already completed process. Meantime, believers are required by God only to "sit and wait", with faith and patience, for his manifestation. They have to consider their present situation as "a wilderness", in which there are no more rules and traditions to indicate the way, and the only task left is to let themselves be guided by God.[728] The absence of any *visible* church does not prevent, however, an inner union among all believers as well as between them and God. It is an *invisible*, purely spiritual church, in which the union is even stronger and any difference of degree is pointless. Since, for Erbury, as we have seen, every believer is intimately united with Christ resurrected, part of him, nobody needs any more that someone else, more learned or intelligent than him, teach him the truths of faith. Christ himself, abiding in him, will let him know everything. Therefore, everybody can learn the

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727 Cornwell, *Royall Commission,* p. 10.

728 Erbury, *No Truth, Nor Errour,* pp. 2, 7, 26; Edwards, *Gangraena*, I, p. 76.

truth by himself, freeing men forever from spiritual direction by others. There is no more need of "Tutor or Teacher, but the Father".[729]

The religious community conceived by Dell, too, is characterised by the renunciation of any organizational model, in favour of a direct, spontaneous relationship between believers and God's Spirit. All forms of outward worship are considered expressions of "the flesh", the spirit of the world as opposed to that of God. Again, any kind of ecclesiastical discipline is a human device, which can lead only to the disintegration of the true church.[730] Dell, like the Presbyterians, believes unity in the church is very important. However, like Peters and Erbury, he sees it as better realised in a mutual friendship, than in uniformity of doctrines. Like Peters, he is strongly in favour of a coexistence of different opinions, forms of worship and discipline within a church. He actually considers it a mark of the true church, of the spreading of God's word everywhere: "whereas, before, the church was to be found but in one kindred, and tongue, and people and nation, now it should be gathered out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation".[731]

Unlike Cornwell or Erbury, however, Dell still admits a separation of functions between clergy and common believers. He attributes a central role to the preaching of ordained ministers. However, the teaching of the minister is valid only as long as it is God who speaks through him. This is not granted in advance. Being a member of the clergy does not necessarily mean being able to communicate the true thought of God; after all, even the minister is a man. It pertains to any believer, of any rank, to decide whether what he is listening to really "is from God": regardless if the "teacher" is a learned and prominent man.[732]

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729 Erbury, *No Truth, Nor Errour,* p. 17.

730 Dell, *Truely Christian Church,* pp. 55-56.

731 ibid, p. 62.

732 ibid, p. 72.

It is to be borne in mind, however, that Dell's "Christian church", like Erbury's, is not open to everybody, but only to God's elect or "saints". Both are, in a sense, highly elitist communities.[733] Yet in both cases, within the community of the elect an absolute equality reigns. We have already seen this process in Erbury.[734] In Dell's church we find the same situation. Every believer has got their own gift: one has a particular faith, another a stronger ability in preaching, others a better inclination to prayer etc. Nobody possesses more gifts than the others, nobody can feel himself superior, everybody has his share in the common spiritual wealth. What one lacks is supplied by others who possess it. The joy and sorrow of anybody becomes the lot of everybody. [735]

Saltmarsh is, beside Peters, the only reformer chaplain who also considers the problems specifically relating to the state, to the "lay" sphere. He distinguishes between the community of believers and civil society, acknowledging for the former a more complete measure of freedom and equality than for the latter. The state is allowed, to some extent, to resort to coercion, for example compelling its members to obey laws. In society even the mere performance of a regulation may be advantageous to the collectivity. In the spiritual life and the life of the church, it is different. Any act must be the result of an inner conviction, otherwise it is purely mechanical or feigned: in both cases contrary to the will of God. Therefore, in the community of believers, coercion is to be utterly abolished. Saltmarsh cites the Gospel: "The kings of the Nations exercise their dominion; it should not be so among you".[736]

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733 For Dell, cf *Truely Christian Church,* pp. 70, 72-73; and *Power from on High* (May 8, 1645) BL, E 282 (8) pp. 27-28. For Erbury, *No Truth, Nor Errour,* pp. 3-5, 18-21.

734 Cf. above, pp. 242-243.

735 Dell, *Truely Christian Church,* pp. 73-74.

736 Saltmarsh, *Smoke in the Temple,* p. 184.

Even in the church perfection cannot be attained at once: there is still a journey to endure, before fully reaching the Spirit of God. In theory, with the coming of Christ in the world, and his gift of the holy Spirit, everybody should be able to be directly enlightened by the truths of faith; an outward code of law that sets them forth should therefore become needless. The outward norm is replaced by an inner one, based no more on coercion but on persuasion. However, in fact this has not still happened. Churches are still established through a rule binding for all their members; and sometimes even "strangers" (as in the case of the Presbyterian "national church"). According to his tolerant attitude, Saltmarsh admits that the makers of this type of Church may have been drawn by a need to build it. However, it is a need he feels should be overcome, a need due to the hardness of human hearts: "But at the beginning it was not so. The Spirit tied them in thousands".[737] Saltmarsh likens the structure of a national church to a pagan model. In a true christian church all members should be brothers to each other, all equally God's sons. Therefore, there should not be a ruling clergy on one side, and a subordinate mass of parishioners on the other. If such a system has lasted so many centuries, it means that the world has been under the power of Antichrist for a long time.[738]

Saltmarsh, certainly, appears more moderate as to the possibility of creating a "true church" on this earth; at least immediately. At the same time, he yearns for a global liberation, from any kind of inward or outward compulsion or restriction; he exhorts his readers to "stand fast in that freedom wherewith God has made us free".[739] All this must have had a stimulating effect on his hearers and readers.

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737 ibid, p. 185.

738 Hill, *Antichrist,* pp. 92-93.

739 Saltmarsh, *Smoke in the Temple,* p. 184.

It is interesting, moreover, the importance he attaches to debate, both in civil and in religious society. Saltmarsh believes that the role of the people, in the kingdom God is going to set up on earth, will be twofold. On one hand passive, in accordance with tradition, obeying superior authorities. On the other active, discussing, consulting each other, putting forward proposals and putting them to the vote.[740] Saltmarsh describes these two functions as complementary: yet the emphasis he puts on the latter reduces the significance of the former and the picture he draws resembles the activities of the army councils.

The importance of a generalized debate is also stressed by Denne, although from a more strictly evangelical point of view. Denne is convinced that God has enabled every human being to understand His truths and transmit them to others. He has provided that these truths should be within the intellectual reach of everybody, even the less intelligent, the less endowed by nature. All, without distinction, are receivers of the good news of the Gospel.[741] The stress on the universal openness of evangelical preaching implicitly undermines the elitist element inherent in the theory of predestination, which, in other respects, Denne adheres to.[742]

What matters more, however, in relation to the politics of the New Model army, is the dimension of public debate. It is the will of God that the Gospel should be spread everywhere, that is communicated and discussed in the streets and the squares; in all the places of collective life[743]. In this picture of the propagation of the Gospel Denne unconsciously outlines a pattern of assembly-discussion which,

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740 ibid, passim.

741 Denne, *Man of Sin,* p. 29.

742 ibid, pp. 3, 11, 12.

743 ibid, pp. 29-30.

transferred to a lay sphere, would be taken on by the army movement: a discussion opened to everybody, without distinction of rank, without regulations limiting the extent of the debate. By putting together the different contributions, a new project finally begins to take form: a reform of inner life for believers, a reform of the structure of society for citizens.

Erbury, beside encouraging an open debate on religious matters, also set himself up as an example. In January 1647, while regimental chaplain in Oxford, he was involved in a number of disputes with members of the assembly of Divines,. especially Cheynell.[744] In at least one case, he must have invited his soldiers to participate, too. In beginning his speech, he addressed them as "fellow soldiers".[745] His declared purpose was to submit his opinions to the judgement of others and have their righteousness tried. He even declared himself ready to "submit and be silent", if his opponents could demonstrate to him that he was wrong. He did not claim that his viewpoint was an incontrovertible truth, but a proposal, one of various possible attempts to attain the truth. He declared himself far from certain, lacking knowledge and even understanding. His training as a minister and all his learning did not enable him to find the truth.[746]

The army movement was to absorb this "searching" attitude: the commitment to finding agreement by examining the subject in depth, together, confronting each other's interpretations or possible solutions. Both the Reading and the Putney debates show this type of process.[747]

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744 *BDBR*, II, p. 253.

745 Erbury, *No Truth, Nor Errour,* p. 1.

746 ibid, pp. 9, 25-26.

747 Cf. C.P.I, pp. 176-214, 226-418.

God is the sole, direct, absolute source of authority, the point of reference for human behaviour. Cornwell makes this point particularly clear. God is the "high priest" and "prophet" of the believer; actually he is also his king. His authority extends to all aspects of a believer's life.[748] Cornwell insists on the need of a total obedience to God, in "all things whatsoever He shall say".[749] He recalls the known maxim of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans: higher powers must always be obeyed, and whoever resists them will be damned forever. As we can see, it is the passage so often invoked by the royalists to justify an unquestioning obedience to the sovereign. Cornwell pushes his parallel as far as defining "rebels" those who ignore the commands of this power.[750]

However, the highest power Cornwell is speaking of is not the same as the royalists'. The preacher identifies it not with a body charged by God with the exercise of authority, but with God Himself. Resisting the highest power, St. Paul said, is like resisting the ordinance of God. However, the highest power *is, consists of,* the ordinance of God, in everything the Lord asks the believer to do. Cornwell refers to St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (II, 20) and the Gospel of St. Matthew (XXVIII,18) to explain that it is Christ, the supreme power set by God in heaven as on earth. Although it is not here his purpose, Cornwell manages to rebut the royalist argument even more radically than constitutional pamphleteers. The latter tried to find exceptions, limitations to St. Paul's maxim, stating for example that obedience was not due in case of an unlawful order. Cornwell simply changes the perspective. It is the object of obedience which is different: not a man, "by what name or title ever distinguished", but the Son of God.[751]

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748 Cornwell, *New Testament,,* p. 19.

749 Cornwell, *Royal Commission,* p. 9.

750 Cornwell, *New Testament,* p. 19.

751 ibid, passim.

However, this almighty and fearful God, who punishes with hell, eternal death, whoever does not conform to his commands,[752] does not want a blind obedience. He demands obedience only from those who have already chosen to be part of His people. He does not want membership of his church to happen by accident (because of birth, or belonging to a family of Christians). Being part of the people of God must be an individual responsibility, the result of a conscious and willing act of faith.[753] While Cornwell, therefore, maintains the duty of men to submit in everything to God, God is apparently inclined to leave them basically freedom of choice. It is true that He may reserve to punish them in due time: however, he requires other men (or human institutions) not to intermeddle, by taking upon themselves the punishment of non-believers. It may even be that these will be called, and converted, in a later time.[754]

Denne agrees that it is not the task of human authorities to make people believe. God does not want them to interfere. He Himself can be a dreadful judge, who sentences to eternal death those who infringe His commands; even only once, or only in one thing.[755] Yet this is His judgement, and He does not authorise anybody to make it in His stead. He wants unbelievers "to be left alone": isolated from the Christian community, but left free to live in their own sphere. Indeed, while this life lasts, they can live together, mingle with the godly. On doomsday, they will be condemned; but not before, and not by any man.[756]

In their relations between each other, God has given men different rules: humility and meekness, and a prohibition of oppressing, of forcing

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752 Cornwell, *Royal Commission,* pp. 8-9, 12.

753 ibid, pp. 6-8, 11-12.

754 ibid, dedication to the Houses, 3rd, 4th page.

755 Denne, *Man of Sin,* pp. 31-32.

756 ibid, pp. 19-20.

one's own will on others. Christians are required to propose, not to impose the Truth of the Gospel. Propagating faith through violence is antichristian.[757] Peters shares the same conviction: God "useth his own media only" to correct the errors of men. The obstacle put by another man, on the contrary, can only excite a contrary will. What matters more, violence itself, especially as a means to spread the Gospel, is wrong. The resort to force is unbecoming the followers of Christ.[758]

Saltmarsh and Dell reached the same conclusion - faith cannot be enforced - although using different arguments. They both remarked that none can believe any truth if God has not revealed it to them first. If God has not done this yet, no earthly force will be able to make them acknowledge it. They will be simply unable to understand. Moreover, perhaps it is God himself who, for some his unfathomable reason, does not want that person to reach that truth yet.[759]

The theme of the freedom of individual conscience could be developed into two ways. 1) The right of the individual not to be forced to profess a faith he does not believe in 2) The duty of the individual, out of conscience, to testify the faith he believes in. In relation to the later political activism of the New Model, the latter point seems to carry more weight. Dell, Cornwell, Denne and Knollis confront this issue in their preaching.

Dell points out that the true church, the union of believers, is inherently opposed to the "world" – i. e. the organized church - and its logic. Therefore, the latter will try to harass and persecute the former. Dell's remarks recall in some respects the ministers' propaganda of the first years of the war: the need to fight for true religion even at the cost of

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757 ibid, p. 19.

758 Peters, *Mr Peters' Last Report,* pp. 7-8.

759 Dell, *Truely Christian Church,* p. 80; Saltmarsh, *Smoke in the Temple,* p.182.

losing one's life. Now, however, he is no longer urging the people to fight an absolute king, or the bishops, because both have been already defeated (the sermon is of June 1646). Like Denne, he believes Antichrist can be found both outside and inside the church, at least, the official one.[760]

Like Palmer and Eachard had done, Dell warns true believers that the task they have to fulfil is hard, even painful.[761] Since the world, that is to say established authorities and beliefs, is irremediably against God's church, they have to expect from it only sorrow, imprisonment, exile, calumny, which they will have to suffer even from relatives or supposed friends. Nor will they be able to benefit from the support of many Christians, too weak openly to side with them. However, while they will never find any rest in this world, God will always be beside them, comforting them, enabling them to go singing to prison, to the cross, to the grave.[762] In spite of their display of coercive violence, the persecutors end up obtaining the opposite effect. Like Eachard, Dell is convinced that persecution will not suppress the truths of faith, but it will rather help them to spread more.[763]

It is worth noting however that Dell, unlike the militant preachers before mentioned, does not aim at the physical destruction of the enemies of the saints. He rather foresees their spiritual failure. The saints' innocence and righteousness will be clearly manifest in their acts and words. It will constitute in itself the condemnation of their persecutors not only before the world, but before the persecutors themselves.[764]

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760 Denne, *Man of Sin*, p. 22.

761 Cf. above, pp. 186-188, 192-193.

762 Dell, *Truely Christian Church*, pp. 67-68.

763 ibid, pp. 54-55.

764 ibid, p. 85.

Cornwell accuses the Roman and Presbyterian churches of usurping God's power, and for the same reasons. Both have arrogated to themselves alone the power to interpret God's word, to decide what is His word and what is not. Once it was for the pope alone to decide; then, the bishops alone; now, the National Synod alone. The word of God, on the contrary, is equally directed to, and equally binding on, every single Christian, however lowly. Every believer in Christ has both the right and the duty to listen to and obey what they believe to be the word of God; in spite of anything that can be threatened against them for it.[765]

For Denne, the Gospel is the means through which every man could achieve salvation. It is therefore essential that all men be given an opportunity to receive it. This is why the first duty of a Christian is to preach what God inspires him to preach; regardless of any prohibition by human authority, even a religious one. Like Cornwell, Denne opposes the command of God to that of the established church, showing that he considers only the first as valid. He urges his readers to preach freely in public, and to form groups and start meetings, defying contrary orders from the public powers.[766] He himself, in that very period, offered the example of a religious dissenter, who had accepted public censure and even prison to keep faithful to what was for him the truth of God. His was at the same time an act of obedience to the Lord and of rebellion towards the state, through its ecclesiastical courts.[767] Since he also renounced his ordination and enlisted in the New Model, his could be considered one of the first acts of civil disobedience and challenges to the state authorities within the army.

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765 Cornwell, *Royal Commission,* 2nd page of the dedication to the Houses, p. 13; *The New Testament,* p. 22.

766 Denne, *Man of Sin,* p. 30.

767 ibid, "To the Church of God", 2nd page.

A similar fate befell Knollis, after he left the church but continued to preach on his own. He was arrested and tried several times, although generally he was released. During his court examinations, he always maintained that God was the sole authority he acknowledged in his preaching. In spite of the ban on preaching formally renewed to him every time, he always declared to the court that he would still do it, not only in church but "door to door".[768] This is another example of religious activism, which tends to combine ecclesiastical heterodoxy in theory, and civil, therefore political disobedience in practice.

Finally, Knollis and Peters seem also to have concerned themselves with problems specifically relating to the condition of the soldiers. The former seems to have stayed in the army for a brief period, and gave up his chaplaincy voluntarily. However, it is interesting to know the reasons which persuaded him to quit. In his memoirs, he states that he had a very good relationship with the soldiery. It was with commanders that he was not at ease. He found in them a pursuit of their own interests and successes, rather than "the cause of God and his people". The cause of God, it seems here, is also that of the common people; the commanders care for neither because they are too much interested in their own power. If anything, it is the soldiers who appear more to be the true believers.[769] This probably happened while the war was still going on, and there was no division or generalized insubordination of the soldiery against superiors, in the New Model. However Knollis' attitude resembles, and in some way anticipates, the attitude of those chaplains - like Saltmarsh and Pinnell - who in the crisis

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768 Knollis, *Life and Death,* pp. 20-23.

769 ibid, p. 20.

of November 1647 were to side with the mutinying soldiers, against the high command.[770]

Hugh Peters was perhaps the chaplain most closely interested in the specific conditions and problems of the soldiers: both from a material point of view and from one which could be called "political consciousness". He was also one of the first to discern the beginning of this type of consciousness in the New Model.[771] He often stressed the fact that military victory in itself was valueless. In a sermon given in a church on a thanksgiving day held after the reducing of Dartmouth, he made it clear that the activity of Parliament's supporters would not end with the end of the war. Victory was only the means to make possible the end: the elimination of abuses by public authorities. The real enemy to defeat was not another army, but tyranny in the state.[772] Although he was not addressing the army particularly on that occasion, he seems to have pointed them out their future work.

In June 1646, in a sermon given just before the New Model, he dealt with some problems particularly concerning the army. He shared their concerns about their arrears of pay, and about the hostility of many civilians against them because of their unorthodox religious activism. He stated that soldiers had the right to claim the arrears due to them for the duty they had performed. He stressed that they had fought also to gain this freedom of making known their grievances; and now must have the possibility to enjoy it.[773] He was here foreshadowing the two main

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770 J. Saltmarsh, *Wonderfull Predictions, Declared in a Message as from the Lord,* to *His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Council of his Army* (1648) BL, E 525 (14); H. Pinnell, *A Worde of Prophesie* (1648) BL, E 1184 (8); Solt, *Saints in Arms,* p. 21; Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 53.

771 For the latter point, cf. below, p. 299.

772 Stearns, *Strenuous Puritan,* pp. 266-267.

773 ibid, p. 287.

themes of the army protest in the following spring. Finally, he shared with Ram, Beech and other chaplains the conviction about the responsibility of Parliament's supporters towards their posterity. The need to carry on the work of reform after the war was linked also to this responsibility.[774]

It is difficult to assess the extent and the limits of the propaganda carried out in the army and its real influence on the later politicization of the New Model. As we have seen, there were two main sources: the military commands themselves and army preachers. The propaganda of the former included both pamphlets and speeches from officers. Concerning the army leadership we have, on one hand, the undoubted commitment of commanders like Cromwell and Skippon. Being at the head of parliamentary forces, they were more likely to exert a wider influence. Skippon, as we have seen, published three booklets specifically addressed to the soldiers. Given his position of command, it is probable that these were widely circulated among them. In addition, other officers occasionally joined the political debate on the justifiability of the war, or the best way to conduct it. As already seen in the case of the author of the tract *Idolaters Ruine*, they wrote with the specific purpose of supporting Parliament ideologically; to win followers to its cause within the army.

However, this type of pamphlet literature was not very common in military milieus: at least, only a few examples are extant. Moreover, even the ideologically committed officers did not always give politics the priority. As we have seen, Skippon's first speech to the newly formed New Model army did not address at all the reasons for fighting. It was concerned solely with the need for a carefully observed discipline in the army. On other occasions, as when he encouraged soldiers before battles,

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774 Peters, *Mr Peters Last Report*, p. 11.

he stressed warlike values: and it was these, not political freedom, which were justified by religious arguments.[775] The same concerns about internal discipline and fighting capacities must have preoccupied other officers, who did not share the ideological commitment of a Cromwell or a Skippon, especially in time of combat. This does not annul the role of ideology in military propaganda, but tends to restrict its extent.

The role of army preachers is even more complex to assess. The first problem is given by the lack of documents directly relating to the New Model Army. Of the sermons here considered only two, that of Dell in June 1646 and that of Beech in September 1645, were directly addressed to the New Model. Then there is the *Souldiers Catechism,* that was targeted at all parliamentary armies and went through various editions in 1645, the year when Fairfax's army was created. Finally, Erbury's sermon *No Truth, nor Errour,* though not addressed to the New Model, but to a parliamentary commission for religion, was preached in the presence of his soldiers. In all other cases we have either sermons by people who were military chaplains, but were not addressing the army on that occasion, or sermons by chaplains and ministers in general, directed at armies other than the New Model before the latter was raised. Some sermons besides, were not only preached to non-military audiences, but by chaplains who did not serve in the New Model: this is the case both with Marshall and Love. The most problematic example from this point of view is the pamphlet by John Eachard, which is neither addressed to any specific corps nor written by an army chaplain. Bowles, Peters, Saltmarsh were chaplains in the New Model. However, none of their surviving pamphlets was preached to it. Denne was first a minister and then an army member, but not a chaplain. Other preachers here considered – Burroughs Palmer, Bridge, Ashe- addressed pre-New Model

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775 Whitelocke, *Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke,* p. 139.

parliamentary armies. Ashe and Bridge in particular gave the sermons here considered at the very beginning of the war.

All these factors undoubtedly lessen the influence they can have exerted on the future army movement; or at least make it more difficult to ascertain it. It could be supposed that the ideas expressed by the New Model chaplains in their general sermons were also present in their teaching to the soldiers. From this point of view Bridge's two pamphlets offer a useful example. As we have seen they have little in common: one is a political treatise, the other a warlike speech. At first sight it might be concluded that the political thought of Bridge did not affect in any way his propaganda among the soldiers. Yet, even in a sermon essentially devoted to exalt military values, the theme of the right of any man to resist oppressive authorities could appear, although briefly. Moreover, it is not necessary to deduce from this example the same dichotomy in the teaching of other chaplains. While they probably adapted their discourse to different audiences, it is also likely that there were some basic beliefs they always maintained. Besides, since they provided for the publication of their non-military sermons or pamphlets, it is also possible that they circulated them among their soldiers. Beside the example of Bridge we have that of Marshall, whose sermon *Meroz Cursed*, originally intended for Parliament members but then preached to many other audiences, could find its way among Essex's soldiers.

Concerning the sermons preached by chaplains of other parliamentary armies or addressed to them, their influence on the New Model is problematic, certainly indirect. However, we have to bear in mind that Fairfax's army was not a totally new force. Out of its twenty-four regiments eight came from Essex's corps and up to eleven from that of Manchester. The sermons given by Burroughs and Palmer, therefore, are likely enough to have reached a substantial number of future members of the New Model. The case of Bridge and Ashe, who were addressing a limited number of volunteers or soldiers of the City Militia,

is more problematic. However, Ashe became later chaplain in Manchester's army, and he published his sermon in print. He may have used it also in his addresses to the latter army.

There are two more limits, beside that of the audience, to the eventual influence exerted by preachers on army members. One is that the number of military chaplains was small in relation to the size of parliamentary armies. In 1980, Kishlansky could count only nine, at least in the New Model.[776] More recently, Anne Lawrence has shown that nine was the lowest figure, concerning 1645 only. Between 1645 and 1650, however, more than forty chaplains served in the New Model; from 1646 to 1649, an average of 18 per year can be counted.[777] Yet this does not really change the situation, because forty is still a low rate for an army numbering 21 thousand men. Moreover, until the creation of the New Model army, after three years of war, the shortage of chaplains was so severe as to raise concerns even amongst army commanders. In July 1644, headquarters were still urgently requesting Parliament to provide the army with preachers. The main reason for the request was the need to ensure more support for the parliamentary cause, among both soldiers and the civilian population in towns where the army was quartered.[778] This also shows that propaganda was a primary task assigned to chaplains, and that the latter were considered particularly effective for that purpose.[779] However, the fact remains that military chaplains were few in number: a circumstance which limited the possibilities of propaganda on their part. At the same time, we must remember that several sermons, including those addressed to the army, were published

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776 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 71.

777 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains*, pp. 54, 57-59.

778 D'Ewes, fo. 86 b (July 3, 1644).

779 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, p. 75.

in print: indeed this is why we know about them. One of the main reasons for printing them must have been ensuring a wider circulation: of course, amongst the soldiers first of all. It is true that many of the latter could not read. In the New Model Infantry, most men were unable at least to write their names. On the other hand, in the Horse the majority tended to be not only literate, but to some extent educated.[780] The very fact that a *Souldiers Catechism* was published implied an assumption that the average private soldier was able to read.

Another problem, already pointed out by Kishlansky, is that not all chaplains were religious radicals, and, anyway, religious radicalism did not necessarily imply democratic political views.[781] We have already noticed the elitist attitude of preachers like the Independent Dell and the millenarian Palmer. They both spoke on behalf of a small group of elect: the "people of God" rather than the people in general. Conversely, however, it is also true that a conservative religious position did not automatically mean political conservatism. Orthodox Presbyterians like Simeon Ashe and Robert Ram could become very radical, at least occasionally, in advocating the right to resistance against established authorities. Moreover, in a number of cases, as we have seen, a correspondence is noticeable between the teaching of army chaplains and the later ideology of the New Model movement.

It is actually difficult clearly to separate a more conservative and a more radical type of parliamentary propaganda. As we have seen, both positions tend to be simultaneously present in the teaching of many preachers, even on the same occasion. Sermons, and to some extent officers' speeches or pamphlets, often seem to suffer from an inner inconsistency, expounding principles which clash with each other. *The*

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780 Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, p. 40; Neuburg, introduction to Ram, *Souldiers Catechism*, p. 2.

781 Kishlansky, *Rise*, pp. 71-73.

Souldiers Catechisme is the most manifest example of this tendency. It stated that a subject is not bound to obey a command which may harm him in some way. However, immediately before, it had also stated that Parliament was the supreme authority, so that refusing to obey it meant resisting the ordinance of God.[782] It would have been very difficult for an average soldier to reach a final conclusion, in favour of self-determination, resting only on the explicit message of texts like this.

However, while from a theoretical point of view this was certainly a weakness, in practice it may not have proved a major obstacle to the politicization of the army. After all, parliamentary propaganda *also* provided arguments in favour of self-determination of the subjects. A coherent revolutionary theory, on the other hand, was perhaps not yet possible during the English civil war. At that time English society was still deeply rooted into tradition and past custom. Change and innovation were seen not as a source of improvement but degeneration. Order and hierarchy were considered as the basis of society. [783] A clear break with the past could not be consciously conceived. A radical justification of the struggle could probably not be carried out alone: it needed to be supported by more traditional arguments.

At the same time the latter, just because they represented a commonplace, were less likely to attract attention. It was the new attitudes towards resistance, individual judgement, inherent rights, which carried more weight. They were made more acceptable by the formal respect for tradition, which accompanied them. However, they still preserved some of their disruptive character. The New Model members seem to have been aware of this. The army movement showed the same selective attitude towards parliamentary propaganda that we have already

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782 Ram, *Souldiers Catechisme*, p. 5.

783 Morgan, *Inventing the People*, p. 21; Russell, *Causes*, pp. 135-136; Baskerville, *Not Peace but a Sword*, p.2.

noticed towards Parliament's declarations.[784] They isolated those passages, in the discourses of preachers and officers, which were significant to them, tending to ignore the others. They remembered Ram's statement on the natural right of subjects to resist even the supreme authority in order to preserve themselves. However, they were apparently untouched by his other teaching, that Parliament's authority could never be questioned.

Therefore, if parliamentary propaganda could help the development of a political movement within the New Model, this was not due only to its inherent qualities. The role of chaplains, in particular, has been likened to that of political commissars in later revolutionary armies, especially in France and Russia. Like the commissars, English civil-war chaplains enjoyed a wide freedom of movement and performed tasks of military information and propaganda.[785] However, in the French revolution the ideological education of soldiers did not produce any autonomous political movement within the army. In Russia, military soviets were formed by units of the ex-tsarist army at the very beginning of the revolution, long before political commissars were established.[786] In the New Model army, the teaching imparted by chaplains (as by other agents) was so effective because it fell on an already predisposed ground. The political education of the soldiers in a sense had already taken place elsewhere, in civil society or in puritan churches. The political debate on the rights of Parliament and subjects, carried out since the eve of the civil war, certainly had an impact as much as the direct army propaganda. The increasing popular participation in politics was even more important,

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784 Cf. above, pp.15-16.

785 Walker, *William Dell*, pp. 144-145.

786 *New Cambridge Modern History*, XII, pp. 408-411; I. Getzler, *L'epopea di Kronstadt (Kronstadt's epic) 1917-1921* (Torino 1982) ch. II.

because it provided a practical example. Finally, there were the experiences of communal life and common debate carried out in puritan congregations: separatist above all, but, to some extent, even Independent. All these processes must have had a closer and more specific influence on the army movement, also based on spontaneous activism and mass participation.

This does not mean that the preachers' and officers' propaganda did not have a real effect. The latter gave their contribution as well. However, they were enabled to do so by these new trends in society, which must have had an influence on army propagandists as much as on their audience. To sum up, none of the factors now mentioned, taken separately, was totally or even mainly responsible for the making of the army movement of 1647. However, each of them - propaganda by military commands, by ministers, alternative church experiences, political protest - had a part in shaping that movement.

Chapter VIII: The Making of the Movement

The army movement of 1647 starts on March 30, when its first petition reaches Parliament.[787] Until this date, however, neither the New Model nor other parliamentary armies seem to have been involved in any form of radical political - or even religious – activism. At least official sources – Journals of the Houses, State Papers, military newsletters, newsbooks – tend to be silent on this subject. The information contained in army newsletters solely concerns war events: battles, sieges, taking of towns, articles of surrender, recruitment of troops etc. The valour of soldiers is often praised. There is no mention of a political commitment spread in the army, especially of an anti-establishment type.[788]

This does not mean that the soldiers are always presented as dutiful. The correspondence of the Committee of both Kingdoms, for example, offers numberless cases of mutiny, desertion and outrages against civilians (plunder, vandalism, even direct violence).[789] Actually, mutiny could be seen as a form of organised protest. Its aims, however, seem always to have been of an immediate and limited character. They generally concerned ensuring pay and supplies, or the determination to remain in the native county. There is never a suggestion of wider political objectives, or of an ideological basis to the protests. The parliamentary Journals contain a number of army petitions for arrears or other grievances. Even in these cases, however, the petitioners never claimed a right as citizens to protest to the public authorities. Neither did they state the right of citizens to rebel against these authorities if they believed their orders to be unjust. The New Model army, on the contrary, was to make

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787 Cf. below, pp. 311-312.

788 cf. *British Museum. General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1955* (London 1964) VIII, England, Appendix, History and Politics, 1642-1646.

789 cf. *CSPD 1644-1645* and *1645-1647.*

both claims.[790] On the other hand, a vehement statement of the army's political-religious radicalism is given by some parliamentarian pamphleteers. The most significant are Richard Baxter and Thomas Edwards, both Presbyterian ministers. They both had a bias against the army, and their polemical purposes make their testimony somewhat dubious.[791] Moreover, Baxter wrote about his period as chaplain in a New Model regiment in 1664, some twenty years after the actual events occurred.[792] He might have been influenced by the subsequent development of the army movement. Edwards, in his turn, never actually witnessed the events he described. He just reported second-hand information.[793]

Yet at the same time we must consider that Baxter *was* an actual witness of the events described, and Edwards was reporting contemporary events. Now, their general testimonies coincide, and as we will see, there is also a correspondence in some specific statements. Baxter, in his memoirs, owned as his a letter that Edwards had published in *Gangraena.* Then he related the same episode.[794] Besides, in a pamphlet published in 1651, a few years after the events, Baxter already confirmed some episodes described in *Gangraena.*[795] In this case, the later remembrance corroborates the contemporary testimony. Edwards in particular, in spite of his exaggerations, appears reliable enough as a

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790 Cf. especially *The Vindication of the Officers of the Army,* p. 2; "Declaration", in Haller & Davies, pp. 55-56, 61.

791 Kishansky, *Rise,* p. ix.

792 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* "A Breviate of the Contents of the Narrative".

793 T. Edwards, *The Third Part of Gangraena* (1646).

794 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 56.

795 N.H. Keeble, G. Nuttall (eds) *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter* (Oxford 1991) I, p. 41.

reporter. He tended to be detailed and precise in his reports, giving names of places where the event occurred and, if not the names, the regiment of the soldiers involved. In case of opinions expressed, he tried to report the very sentences that had been uttered. Baxter was more general in its descriptions, probably because he wrote many years later. Occasionally, however, even he was accurate enough, as when he distinguished the more extreme radicalism of major Bethel's troop from that of the rest of the regiment. In this respect, they both differ from other hostile witnesses, such as Robert Baillie, whose rare references to the New Model are rather vague, tending to represent that army as an undifferentiated whole. Moreover, as we will see, at least some of their reports were backed by other sources, such as pro-army pamphleteers (Lilburne and Edmund Chillenden) or even official papers. Therefore, I agree with Woolrych and Gentles that, while Edward's testimony cannot be indiscriminately accepted, it is not to be wholly rejected either.[796]

At the same time it is true that, until the Spring of 1647, the information on army activism is scanty and limited. This type of news seldom appears and is only briefly mentioned. Except for Edwards and a few parliamentary pamphleteers, it does not seem to have attracted much attention. The comparison with the abundance of public information on the New Model political initiatives after March 1647 shows that a difference exists between the two periods.

Some explanation is perhaps offered by Baxter in his memoirs. He describes small groups of officers and soldiers always busy in discussions during free time. He insists that they were a tiny minority, but were able to carry the rest with them. They showed themselves very favourable to a democratisation of both church and state.[797] However, these soldiers did

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796 Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* p.21; Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", p. 270, fn 32. See also Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie, p. 34.*

797 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 53; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie, p. 60.*

not try to put into practice their vision of society. They did not write petitions on these subjects (except in one case, in which the document never reached Parliament).[798] They did not assemble en masse before Parliament, as the London population did; Baxter himself acknowledged their good conduct in the field.[799] Their opposition to the existing order remained generally confined to their circles, and was expressed through theoretical discussions. This is true at least until the end of the war. Afterwards there were to be more infringements of parliamentary ordinances, such as the one against lay-preaching. The main difference with the movement of 1647 is that the latter's action did affect state politics.

Another possible explanation for the general silence of official sources might be the willingness, in military commands and in Parliament, to avoid internal differences in time of war. There might have been a fear of weakening the parliamentary front. As long as criticism of authority did not interfere with military results, it was probably seen as more convenient to pass over it. This hypothesis finds some confirmation in the State Papers. One of the minutes of the sessions of the Committee of both Kingdoms mentions "differences" between one Colonel White and others (officers?) in his garrison. The committee thought it necessary to write to him immediately, asking him to appease disagreements, since the king's army was drawing nearer.[800] On another occasion the committee intervened with a county committee, advising them to put up with some intemperances of the soldiers of the garrison in Oswestry, who demanded more regular pay. The reason for this was always the proximity of the enemy and the fear that they could take advantage of

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798 Cf. below, p. 311.

799 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* pp. 50, 53-54.

800 *CSPD 1645-1647,* p.188 (October 11, 1645); p. 193 (October 14, 1645).

internal divisions among Parliament's forces.[801] In the autumn of 1644, the Earl of Manchester wrote to the House of Lords, expressing his worries about Cromwell's countenancing of religious radicalism. He complained he had already addressed himself to the Committee of both Kingdoms, warning them about the situation in the army. However, the Committee had asked him to put up with it for the time being, because of the pressing exigencies of the war.[802]

In conclusion, there is no possible comparison between the army radical activism before and after March 1647. However, even before this date, some kind of political and religious commitment began to develop in parliamentary armies. Since the New Model was a composite of former forces, I have considered also the experiences of the latter.[803]

Religious activism

In the army, religious activism preceded specifically political activism and, until March 1647, it was clearly predominant. This does not mean that it has to be considered as a separate process. On the contrary, it had close links with politics, and in a sense was preparatory to it. Through radical religion, army members experienced a type of communal life and showed an autonomous capacity for initiative that would then be applied to politics. The most common forms of religious radicalism were informal lay preaching and the creation of spontaneous congregations or "gathered churches." The former implied the exercise of a religious freedom of expression, and a denial of the superiority of the clergy over the laity. Moreover, it often entailed a confrontation with appointed ministers, in the pulpit and in the presence of church-goers. The gathered

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801 *CSPD 1645-1647,* p. 358 (February 28,1646).

802 Gardiner (ed), "Letter from the Earl of Manchester", p. 1.

803 Cf. above, p. 80.

church implied a self-government of common believers in matters of worship and discipline. It was also characterised by a free, often unfettered debate, among all the members, on an equal level. Both the confrontation with authorities and the self-government of the rank and file were to be important features in the movement of 1647. Finally, some sectarian religious principles had libertarian and egalitarian overtones. Two examples are the total respect for individual conscience and the conviction of the capacity of every believer to teach the truth. What connected these two principles was the idea that the only authority believers had to be subjected to was the voice of the Spirit within them. This, for example, was the conviction of some troopers of Col Whalley's regiment. As a consequence, they refused every form of external direction in matters of worship, such as standard prayers or praying at set times.[804]

Sometimes, the belief in the voice of the Spirit could justify unauthorised actions. A quartermaster in a cavalry regiment, for instance, started to preach from a church's pulpit because he felt compelled to do so by the Spirit. He was convinced that he had received a call and had a duty to respond to it.[805] A lieutenant of the Horse, who had been confined for preaching and challenging ministers in the pulpit, found his strength in the same conviction. He wrote to the governor of the town that he did not fear either civil or ecclesiastical power and did not declare himself repentant.[806]

Freedom of conscience was another relevant point. According to Edwards, radical soldiers were neither Presbyterians nor Independents. They were against any state church, any ecclesiastical order imposed on

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804 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 53.

805 Edwards, G*angraena* III, p. 172.

806 ibid, p. 111.

the people from above, including the Congregationalist one. Baxter too reported that, at least in one troop of Whalley's regiment, that of Major Bethel, soldiers opposed any institutional church, including the Independent model.[807] The only religious rule they accepted was that of everybody's freedom to believe and worship according to their personal inclinations. Individual freedom, therefore, extended not only to opinions, but religious practices. Besides, people should be left free not only to hold different views, but to propagate them. This concept of freedom is very close to the modern secular idea.[808] These allegations seem to be confirmed by Saltmarsh's testimony one year later. Speaking on behalf of the army movement, he declared that the latter had no intention of setting up an Independent church instead of a Presbyterian one. This, however, was not due to an allegiance to the Presbyterian order, but to the opposition against any order imposed on consciences, including the Independent one.[809] As we have seen, the *Vindication* issued by the movement in July 1647 was to assert exactly this principle.[810]

The respect for individual conscience might include even Catholics, who for puritans were the main followers of Antichrist. According to Edwards, at least, a soldier of Cromwell's regiment defended the right of liberty of conscience for Jesuits as well.[811] Another soldier explained that he had not fought "papists" for the type of religion

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807 ibid, p. 175; Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 54.

808 Edwards, G*angraena* III, passim; Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 53; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* p. 61;cf. also Davis, "Religion and the Struggle for Freedom", pp. 513, 521, for a definition of modern freedom.

809 *Letter from the Army*, p. 3.

810 Cf above, pp. 27-28.

811 Edwards, G*angraena* III, p. 173.

they professed, because he believed everybody was free to worship according to their conscience.[812]

Other principles maintained by the New Model soldiers implied a religious egalitarianism, a levelling of differences: between the laity and the clergy, the learned and the uneducated, men and women. In September 1646, the troops quartered in Northamptonshire preached against ministerial ordination. They defined as blasphemous considering some men endowed with more authority than all other Christians. For this reason they were also against tithes. They labelled as "thieves" those ministers who accepted them.[813] A New Model lieutenant publicly claimed that women had the right, and the ability, to preach. He also believed that kneeling to pray was wrong. In the same period, in Oxford, both officers and soldiers questioned the religious value of human learning, even in theological matters. All these opinions were also attributed to parliamentary soldiers in a pro-army pamphlet published in the spring of 1647.[814] The belief in universal redemption, too, was apparently widespread in the army, in 1645-1646. It was maintained, for example, by many of the soldiers quartered at Yaxley, Huntingdonshire, during the Summer of 1646. In the same period, a soldier of Ireton's regiment warned a woman outside a church that not believing that Christ had died for all was a sin.[815]

The army members, therefore, did not express their opinions only among themselves. Sometimes, they also tried to propagate them amongst civilians. During 1645 and 1646, according to Edwards,

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812 Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* p. 60.

813 ibid, p. 21.

814 ibid, pp. 22-23; *Certaine Scruples from the Army* (June 3, 1647) BL, E 390 (21) pp. 2-5, 9.

815 Edwards, G*angraena* III, pp. 19, 96.

"sectarian" soldiers protested against tithes, and encouraged the people not to pay them. In a town in Leicestershire a tithe collector was assaulted by some troopers.[816] Baxter also reported that the New Model radical soldiers spread their ideas among the population, not only by preaching, but by circulating anti-establishment pamphlets. Among these, there were the Marpriest Tracts, and the works of Overton and Lilburne. According to Baxter, their propaganda had much influence on the people.[817]

These soldiers so well known for their discipline could challenge even the military code, in what concerned religion. They opposed the clause in Essex's Articles of War which punished blasphemers by boring through their tongue. On one occasion, they tried to stop the execution of this penalty. They argued that it belonged to God only to punish offences directed against Him.[818] In Leamington, Warwickshire, the soldiers publicly questioned the role of ministers and of official religious services, urging the people not to attend them.[819]

These testimonies come from biased sources. However, in some way they are confirmed by Lilburne, who defended these soldiers. In *The Just Man's Justification* he accused Colonel King, his superior in 1644, of harassing a number of officers out of hostility towards their religious zeal. King had imprisoned some of them "for exercising the very power of godliness." This tract is part of a petition addressed to Parliament, in which Lilburne asks that King be tried for military misdemeanours. Considering the institution he was addressing, it is unlikely that he would have openly described these officers as radicals, or religious dissenters.

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816 ibid, pp. 32, 46.

817 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* pp. 53, 56; Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* p. 62.

818 Edwards, G*angraena* III, p. 46.

819 ibid, pp. 19-20.

However, the extreme "godliness" he refers to seems to fit well enough with the description by an ally of Manchester of the sectarian army members countenanced by Cromwell. Besides, at least one of the conscientious officers mentioned by Lilburne as persecuted by King, lieutenant colonel Bury, was known as an Independent.[820]

The most common form of religious activism in the parliamentary army was spontaneous preaching, and the often connected practice of interrupting religious services. For the latter there were cases going back to the very beginning of the war. The target, of course, was not the Presbyterian, but still the Anglican worship. In October 1642, at Worcester, some parliamentary soldiers entered the cathedral during the service, still in the Anglican liturgy (with organ music etc). The soldiers, hearing church-goers pray for the king, intervened, protesting because Parliament was not mentioned. Then, they took the initiative to propagandise the cause of Parliament among the inhabitants of the town.[821] The soldier who reported the episode, Nehemiah Wharton, made a revealing remark about the Anglican liturgy. He described it as "humane service", which the soldiers left to search for a real divine one. They found it in a sermon by Obadiah Sedgwick, parliamentary chaplain.[822] A few years later, other soldiers were to find the new Presbyterian service equally human, and sought out more authentic forms of faith.

According to the Presbyterian Major-General Crawford, as early as 1644, in the Isle of Ely, it was very common that soldiers preached from

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820 J. Lilburne, *The Just Man's Justification* (1646) BL, E 340(12), p. 20; Bruce, Masson, *Manchester's Quarrell*, p. 72; C. Holmes, "Colonel King and Lincolnshire Politics" *H.J.* XVI (1973) p. 463.

821 Wharton, *Letters from a Subaltern Officer*, p. 25.

822 ibid, passim.

the church pulpits.[823] The first case of a preaching officer to attract public attention was that of Colonel Pickering. In April 1645, just appointed to a New Model regiment in Abingdon, he took the initiative to preach to his soldiers on a Sunday. Apparently his attempt caused a mutiny among the soldiery, who were ready to follow him in military, but not religious matters. This suggests a lack of any sectarian inclination among his men. However one year later, most officers of this regiment, which was now Hewson's, practised spontaneous preaching.[824] Sir Symonds D`Ewes, who relates this episode, devotes to it only a few lines. However, he attributes to this incident Parliament's decision to pass the ordinance against lay preaching.[825] In June 1645, two officers of Colonel Fleetwood's regiment, quartered at Newport Pagnell, were arrested by the governor for preaching without ordination. The two officers were Paul Hobson and Richard Beaumont, and had involved in their activities also a marshal and an ensign of the Newport garrison. The governor, Sir Samuel Luke, arrested them and committed them to the council of war. However both Colonel Fleetwood and Fairfax intervened on their behalf and had them released. The former, writing to Luke to defend his men, apparently talked about a "new light" that they were helping to spread.[826]

In 1645 at Agmondesham (now called Amersham), Buckinghamshire, some separatists organised a public meeting in the local church to discuss their opinions. A troop of Whalley's regiment, that of captain Pritchford (formerly Bethel's, indicated by Baxter as particularly radical) joined them. The soldiers took turns with civilian

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823 Bruce, Masson, *Manchester's Quarrell,* p. 73.

824 *BDBR,* II, pp. 82-83.

825 D`Ewes', fo 204b-205; Gardiner, *Great Civil War,* II, pp. 192-193; for the ordinance see Firth, Rait, *Acts and Ordinances,* I, p. 677.

826 H. Ellis (ed) *Original Letters Illustrative of English History* (London 1846) 3rd series, IV, pp. 254-255, 262-266.

separatists to speak. Baxter intervened in the debate to refute their theories and remained all day. He also took some Presbyterian officers with him to prove that not all army members were sectarians.[827] This episode represents one of the first examples of co-operation between the military and the local people in forms of religious activism.

In June 1646, Whitelocke reported to have listened to "excellent sermons" given by New Model officers in the army headquarters at Oxford, after the surrender of Charles I. On one occasion, the officers had prayed together, besides preaching.[828] In this period the army's religious heterodoxy began to be widely noticed. In July "distractions in the army" were reported in the House of Lords as a matter to be discussed in the next session.[829] The day after, the Lords asked for a joint session with the Commons. They wanted to ask Fairfax to ensure that all army members took the Covenant, and obeyed Parliament's ordinance to refrain from preaching. This suggests that spontaneous preaching was already apparent in the New Model.[830]

Edwards talked about a very frequent practice of preaching both by officers and soldiers at Oxford in the same period. It seems that they used church pulpits, turning out the appointed ministers. They even preached in the colleges of the university, instead of the divines. After a number of complaints, Fairfax forbade preaching in the university. The soldiers obeyed but continued to preach elsewhere in the town.[831]

In August 1646, in Exeter, the officers of the garrison preached continuously, both in private houses and public places, like the castle and

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827 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 56.

828 Whitelocke, *Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke,* p. 187.

829 *L.J.,* VIII, p. 423 (July 8, 1646).

830 *L.J.,* VIII, pp. 425, 427 (July 9-10, 1646); p. 433 (July 14, 1646).

831 Edwards, G*angraena* III, p. 23.

the guildhall. The governor of the town supported them. The county committee, under pressure from the local clergy, had Parliament's ordinance against lay preaching reprinted, and publicly read in the cathedral. During the reading, the soldiers present jeered at it. Moreover, the governor declared that the ban did not apply to the soldiers' religious meetings, and announced one on the same day in the castle.[832] At "Wantwich", Berkshire, a sectarian soldier began to preach in the parish church. After expounding his religious views, he invited his hearers to address him questions and objections. He was willing to submit his arguments to other people's judgement.[833]

In October 1646, two Horse soldiers had an argument about lay preaching, which one supported and the other rejected. The dissension degenerated into a fight, during which the latter killed the former. The newsbooks talked of a Presbyterian who had killed an Independent. The killer was condemned for murder, but the council of war preferred not to make any mention of the difference of opinion between the two. Probably the army commanders did not want to make public any divisions in the army.[834]

In November 1646, in Oxford, there was a public meeting between six Presbyterian ministers and six separatists, among whom four were New Model officers. One of them was Colonel Hewson. Two or three hundred students from the university were present.[835] The subject of the debate was the legitimate ministry. The Presbyterians argued that Jesus had entrusted the task to govern the church to ordained ministers only.

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832 ibid, p. 42.

833 ibid, p. 174.

834 P*erfect Occurences* (October 9-16,1646) BL, E 513 (18): (Tuesday, October 13).

835 *The Relation of a Publike Conference...Betwixt the Six Presbyterian Ministers and the Independent Commanders* (November 12, 1646) BL, E 363(4), pp. 3-4; Edwards, G*angraena* III, p. 250.

They alone could lawfully preach. The separatists, on the contrary, maintained that the gift of preaching could be possessed by any Christian. Moreover, they denied the lawfulness of the priestly authority of the regular clergy. They accused Presbyterian ministers of not being true men of God, because they prevented some forms of religious communion (that of gathered churches). Besides, they made use of a worldly power, that of the state, to impose their model of church.[836] The separatists gave proof of considerable rhetorical ability, and succeeded in making their opponents appear unsure of their arguments. The latter, moreover, declined to attend a further meeting, which should have taken place a week later.[837] Another dispute on the same subject, but carried out in a more informal way, took place roughly in the same period, also in Oxfordshire. Some Presbyterian clergymen were stopped by a group of common soldiers and challenged to demonstrate their spiritual authority. The soldiers maintained that ordained ministers did not have a greater power to preach than any Christian inspired by God's word.[838]

Also in November, in the garrison of Bristol, a major who was leaving his regiment gave a farewell sermon to his men.[839] It was a comment on a verse in St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "Stand fast in the faith". In the sermon, the major called his men "fellow soldiers", therefore abolishing, at least formally, the distinction of rank between him and them. He could do so because he considered both of them to belong to the same "church militant," a military-religious community committed to defend the word of God.[840] However, surprisingly the

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836 *Publike Conference,* pp. 5-9.

837 ibid, pp. 10-14.

838 Tuttle, *Religion et Idéologie,* p. 60.

839 *Orders given out: the word, Stand Fast* (November 8, 1646) BL, E 366(3).

840 *ibid,* pp. 1-3.

content of the sermon was rather conservative, rejecting conscience as the measure of truth, and warning the soldiers against heresy, and a "Tolerance of Errors".[841] What is striking is that this orthodox officer was practising something that the opposers of toleration always condemned. It may be that the general spread of lay preaching ended up affecting even those who did not share other sectarian principles.

The first official complaint about religious heterodoxy in the army appeared in December 1646, in two petitions of the London Presbyterians to the Common Council. They talked about soldiers who "usurped pulpits", to preach "strange and dangerous errors". Apparently the practice was even more frequent among the soldiery than among the officers. The Common Council transmitted the petition, and annexed remonstrance, to the House of Commons. The latter promised to take speedy measures to overcome the problem. On December 31, the ordinance against lay preaching and interruption of religious services, first issued in April 1645,[842] was renewed. A commission was appointed to consider complaints on this matter. However these measures were probably not very effective since, at the end of the ensuing January, a third petition followed. It had the same content and was subscribed by the same people.[843] At the beginning of 1647, unauthorized preaching was still a common practice.

In January Jeremiah Ives, a Horse soldier who would become an army chaplain,[844] preached in Buckingham, in the market-place. Apparently in this case both the bailiff and the parish minister had given their consent. The soldier's sermon was so appreciated by the people that they asked

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841 *ibid,* pp. 5-6.

842 See above, p. 273, fn 825.

843 *J.C.C.,* XL, fo 200 (December 10, 1646) fo 204 (January 25, 1647); *Old Parliamentary History,* XV, pp. 221-235.

844 Lawrence, *Army Chaplains,* p. 138.

him to preach again in the afternoon. This information, however, must be taken with caution, since it comes from a clearly pro-army witness.[845]

Also in January John Gregory, a private in Colonel Rich's regiment, was brought before the council of war for offences against religion. He had been denounced by a minister in Northampton, in whose parish he had preached, expounding passages from the Bible. Besides this transgression, he had declared the minister to be an agent of Antichrist. He had admitted having already preached twice in Oxford, and had announced that he would preach again the next Sunday. He declared he felt the moral duty to communicate the meaning of Scripture to others, as the Spirit revealed it to him. The soldier apparently had made some offensive statements, such as that the Psalms were not inspired by God; and that he did not want to see the Lord's day observed. Finally, contrary to what had been the official objective of the war, he did not believe he had to fight popery. What he had fought for was freedom, and if papists had proved to ensure it better, he would have fought on their side. Here, the political, libertarian motivation of the struggle is seen in opposition to a strictly confessional one.[846]

The council of war argued that it did not belong to them to try the soldier on religious matters. However, they still examined him on three of the charges: the offence given to the minister, the refusal to consider the Psalms part of the Scripture and the declaration on papists. All these charges were confirmed by sworn witnesses. The council of war ordered the soldier to apologise to the minister and imprisoned him for one night. Later, however, they seem to have victimised the minister, quartering some troops in his home. The attitude of the council in all this matter suggests that at this stage there was at headquarters a lenient attitude towards these

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845 *Perfect Diurnall,* N° 181 (January 11-18, 1647) BL, E 513 (34), p. 1453.

846 *The Copy of a Letter Written from Northampton* (1646) BL, E 373 (20), pp. 2-3; *Perfect Diurnall* N° 181, p. 1453; Massarella, *Politics of the Army,* pp. 4.5.

activities.[847] In the same period, at Streatham, in the Isle of Ely, sectarian parishioners invited a soldier to preach in the parish on Christmas day. Two of the people involved were identified and imprisoned.[848]

In August 1647, Lieutenant Chillenden was to publish an apology for lay-preaching. He argued that the ability to preach did not come from ordination, a purely human warrant, but by the grace of God's Spirit. The latter was independent from ordination. Quoting from the Bible, Chillenden maintained that God had given the power to preach to every Christian, and not only to the church as an institution. Every believer could be a prophet.[849] Chillenden dedicated his pamphlet to his fellow soldiers in the army, urging them to preach as the Spirit taught them, without fearing bans or persecution.[850] It is true that this tract was written after the army's movement had developed for a few months. However, since the beginning of the movement, the soldiers were apparently engaged in a political, secular activism rather than in a religious one.[851] Chillenden's statements seem therefore to refer to an earlier phase.

Edwards reports also several cases of ministers interrupted and challenged during their sermons, or other parts of the religious service. The disturbers were individual soldiers, or companies, or mixed groups of military men and civilians. Sometimes a soldier started preaching from the pulpit, after turning out the minister. Sometimes they let the latter stay on in the pulpit, but began to argue with him on doctrinal matters. In both cases the soldiers expounded heterodox religious theories: universal salvation, the unlawfulness of tithes, and of infant baptism, the

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847 *Letter from Northampton,* pp. 3-4; *Perfect Diurnall,* passim

848 *L.J.,* VIII, p. 651 (January 7, 1647) p. 693 (January 28, 1647).

849 E. Chillenden, *Preaching without Ordination* (August 20, 1647) BL, E 405 (10).

850 ibid, "Epistle to the Reader".

851 Cf. above, p. 62.

antichristian character of the Presbyterian church. Ministers were sometimes openly called papists, false prophets or members of Antichrist, who told lies to their flocks. Some of them apparently were then removed and replaced by Independent preachers, by the intervention of the soldiers.[852]

Vandalism against churches was another aspect of the army religious activism. It was present both in the early stages of the war and after its end, but in the latter period the target had changed. It was no more the anglican, but the Presbyterian model of worship. Nehemiah Wharton, underofficer in Essex's army in 1642, described various episodes of iconoclasm involving parliamentary soldiers. He took part in at least some of them. At Acton, in August, some troopers burnt the altar rails and defaced the stained glass windows of the church. The next day they did the same at Chiswick. At Uxbridge too, the altar rails of the church and the Book of Common Prayer were removed and burnt. It is difficult to consider these acts as pure expressions of vandalism, since they were followed by the reverential listening to sermons given by puritan preachers. Wharton himself, who was involved in these actions, expressed at the same time the need for the soldiers to be guided by "faithfull able ministers".[853]

Then, in 1646, there are some episodes reported by Edwards. In one case a soldier, George Young, demolished the seats of a parish which had been made out of the remnants of the old chancel. He accused the minister of promoting the rites of the Church of Rome, like the anglican clergy. He then predicted that the Presbyterian church would collapse as well, very soon. In October 1646, Colonel Hewson's men used the church of Wallington as a prison for about ten days. In addition, they burnt the chancel and smoked during the service. At Latenor, near Aston,

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852 Edwards, G*angraena* III, pp. 30, 32, 62, 95-6, 110-111, 172-173, 250-253.

853 Wharton, *Letters from a Subaltern Officer,* pp. 5-7, 11; Underdown, *Revel,* p. 177.

soldier-preachers again turned the local church into a prison for a few days, and burnt the boards and the pulpit.[854]

The forming of private conventicles in the army was apparently less frequent than preaching. At least, it is less well documented. Around 1644, Cromwell and some other officers of the Ironsides quartered at Cambridge decided to make themselves into a gathered church. However, they still felt the need for an officially authorised guidance, because they asked Baxter to be their minister. The latter refused, judging their kind of community religiously unlawful.[855] In October 1643 Colonel King, an officer of Manchester's army, arrested some officers of his regiment, others of the Ironsides and some inhabitants of Boston, where the troops were quartered. He accused all of them of taking part in an unauthorised meeting. The episode is related by Lilburne, who does not explain what kind of meeting it was. In any case, here again the military and civilians seem to have acted in concert, for a common end.[856] The same happened in June 1645, in Newport Pagnell, where the radical officers Hobson and Beaumont operated. They were invited to preach in a private house in a nearby town. Seven women, seven men and a boy took part, all of them poor. Then, during a day of thanksgiving ordered by the governor to celebrate a recent victory, the two officers organised a kind of alternative religious meeting.[857] These episodes seem to foreshadow the willingness to seek the co-operation of the rest of the people which was to be an important feature of the army movement.[858]

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854 Edwards, G*angraena* III, pp. 64, 253.

855 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 51.

856 Lilburne, *Innocency,* pp. 41-42; Holmes, "Colonel King", p. 462.

857 Ellis, *Original Letters,* 3rd series, IV, pp. 254-255.

858 Cf. above, pp. 58-61.

Both spontaneous preaching and the forming of conventicles were acknowledged and defended by an army member in a tract written in January 1647, just two months before the start of the movement.[859] The author wanted to refute the accusations of religious heterodoxy made against the New Model especially by Edwards. However, he ended up confirming the matters of fact in Edwards' main accusations. He admitted the presence of heretical religious opinions, but denied that they were particularly widespread. Above all, he acknowledged the existence and spread, among both officers and soldiers, of unauthorised preaching and the forming of conventicles. He confirmed that the latter might include civilians, as well as the military.[860] Concerning preaching, he justified it in terms of the shortage of military chaplains, and the fact that they remained only briefly with the army. This inadequacy of religious assistance, according to the author, had compelled the soldiers to provide for their spiritual edification themselves. This type of justification was repeated, a few months later, in another pamphlet, written on behalf of the army.[861]

The author, however, gave also other justifications both for preaching and spontaneous religious exercises. He denied that the New Model men arrogated to themselves the authority to preach in the capacity of ministers. However, at the same time he argued that they could preach in their capacity as Christians. He defended such a practice as obeying the command of Jesus, who wanted all believers to exhort and instruct each other. By the same principles, the exercises of the conventicles were justified too. The author then argued that anyone who preached in the name of Christ was his disciple, regardless of the

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859 W.G., *A Just Apology for an Abused Army* (1646) BL, E 372 (22).

860 ibid, pp. 12, 16-18.

861 ibid, p. 18; *Vox Militaris* (August 11, 1647) BL, E 401 (24), pp. 8-9.

correspondence of his opinions with the teachings of the established church. He reproached the ministers who criticised the teaching of the soldiers, and accused them of narrowness of mind.[862] His powerful defence of the army, therefore, in fact supports Edwards' account.

Another indirect confirmation comes from Fairfax. In February 1647, he wrote to Parliament to complain about the continual criticism levelled at the New Model since the end of the war. On this occasion, he mentioned as widespread the conviction that the army members stirred up sedition and were perturbers of political and religious peace. It is significant that Fairfax rejected as false aspersions "divers", but not all these accusations.[863]

Mutinies and disturbances

Before analysing the political commitment in parliamentary armies, we must take into account another aspect of army activism: mutiny and disturbances. Of course, they cannot necessarily be considered an expression of ideological radicalism. Nonetheless, in a more immediate and elementary way, they represent a form of protest and of organised initiative from the rank and file. The New Model army itself never mutinied, before its refusal to disband in the Spring of 1647. However, it may have been influenced by the example of provincial armies and garrisons, to which its units were often attached during the war.[864] The latter often resorted to this form of protest, usually between 1645 and 1647. During this period there were mutinies in thirty-six out of forty English counties, and in many parts of Wales.[865]

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862 W.G., *A Just Apology*, pp. 16-19.

863 *Perfect Diurnall*, N° 184 (February 1-8, 1647) BL, E 513 (37) p. 1475.

864 Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 61.

865 Morrill, *Nature*, p. 346.

Unlike the protest of the army movement, the mutinies of provincial forces often implied the use of direct violence against superiors, local officials and others. Both were taken as hostages on various occasions, to ensure that the soldiers' requests would be met. In other cases, money was extorted from them by threats, to pay the soldiers. In many counties, there are recorded cases of murder, extortion and acts of vandalism committed by army members against civilians.[866] Moreover, mutinies were caused by strictly economic or local grievances, (arrears, unequal distribution of pay among the regiments, desire not to leave one's county to stranger forces etc). A more general protest against the government's policy, even in relation to these specific army problems, seems absent.[867]

Nevertheless, there are also elements in common with the New Model movement. The most relevant are the refusal to obey orders and the assuming of unauthorised initiatives. On various occasions, the troops refused to go to their quarters until they had been paid. In other cases, they deserted their quarters en masse without orders. Sometimes they threatened to disband on their own initiative, if their requests were not met. Episodes of refusal to obey orders occurred in eighteen counties, and there were threats of mass desertion in ten more. These initiatives implied an organised, co-ordinated action by the soldiery, contacts among companies and between them and their officers. In some cases, it was the latter who instigated, or at least supported, the rebellion. In September 1646, for example, the county committee of Hereford wrote to the Commons complaining about incendiaries in the army. In particular, they reported the case of an officer, Captain Thomas Millward. He apparently had incited the troops of the garrison to mutiny, by criticising

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866 Morrill, *Nature,* pp. 336-344, 348, 354; *Perfect Occurrences* (July 17-24, 1646) BL, E 511 (24); (August 7-14, 1646) BL, E 513 (3) (August 10).

867 Morrill, *Nature,* p. 347.

the action of the committee in their presence. In fact the mutiny, for lack of pay, had broken out a few hours after his speech.

In most cases, however, the rebellion was due to the autonomous action of the soldiery.[868] Episodes of insubordination and challenges to superiors occurred from the beginning of the war. Usually they were caused by lack of pay; but sometimes it was just the behaviour of the commander that was questioned. After colonel King arrested some of Cromwell's soldiers for unauthorized meeting, the regiment demanded to have him cashiered. The soldiers went as far as threatening to desert if their superior retained his post. King was not removed and was actually promoted soon after. At the same time, however, the soldiers were not punished for their "mutinous" request.[869]

Nehemiah Wharton reported a case in which the opposition of the soldiery to their lieutenant-colonel was more successful and caused his removal. It is true that, according to Wharton, this man was disliked by the other commanders as well. However, the examples of insubordination that he reports concern only common soldiers or inferior officers. One day, the troop openly showed its dislike of the officer. On another occasion, the latter gave to two of his captains an order that they judged arbitrary, so they refused to obey it. A little later, both the soldiers and the sergeants of the regiments refused to march under the officer's command. This did not result, as in theory the military code required, in a court martial for the people involved. On the contrary, the lieutenant-colonel was removed the very day after the episode.[870] Of course, we are still far from the time when it is the soldiers of the New Model who

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868 Morrill, *Nature,* pp. 340-341, 346-349, 351; *HMC, Portland MSS III,* p. 145 (September 22, 1646).

869 Holmes, "Colonel King", p. 462.

870 Wharton, *Letters from a Subaltern Officer,* pp. 6-8.

depose the undesirable superiors on their own initiative.[871] Essex's troop still waited for the army commanders to intervene. However, they had already actively worked to get this result.

A similar situation occurred in Manchester's army. At the end of 1644, some regiments began to challenge their commander, Major-General Crawford. They systematically refused to obey his orders, and resumed their duties only after he was replaced. The regiments most involved in the protest were those of Colonels Montague and Pickering, the former an Independent and the latter a preaching-officer. Cromwell also intervened, accusing Crawford of military mismanagement and asking to have him tried by a council of war. However, this request was rejected by Manchester. Crawford was an orthodox Presbyterian. In this case, the mutiny might have been caused by hostility to his religious position.[872]

Another significant episode of insubordination is reported by Baxter. When Lord Capel besieged the town of Wem, the Cheshire troops were mobilised to go to its relief. However, the soldiers declared that they were too weary, and anyway they wanted to protect their county, which a little before had been plundered by Lord Capel's men. They therefore refused to march. Yet, after thinking over the matter for one night, they changed their minds and were ready to relieve Wem.[873] These soldiers seem to have wanted to assert in some way their right to decide for themselves what was right to do, rejecting a purely passive obedience. These episodes apparently confirm the later testimony of Colonel Hutchinson about the prevailing attitude in parliamentary armies. He, too, reported that Parliament's soldiers tended to accept the

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871 Cf. above, pp. 51-52.

872 Bruce, Masson, *Manchester's Quarrell,* pp. 61-62; Baillie, *Letters and Journals,* II, pp. 60-61, 66; Holmes, "Colonel King"; pp. 466-467.

873 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 45.

command only of the officers who had their approbation: they obeyed orders only if they agreed with them. Hutchinson considered this tendency a weakness, from the point of view of military efficiency.[874] However, in some ways these soldiers were putting into practice Cromwell's exhortation to "know what they were fighting for".[875] More often, anyway, the refusal to obey orders and fight was caused by lack of pay and adequate supplies.[876]

There is a case of refusal to disband which precedes the action of the New Model. In December 1646 the Committee of both Kingdoms ordered Fairfax to disband by force the cavalry regiment of Colonel Martin, in Radnorshire. The latter had refused to comply with the ordinance of disbandment issued by Parliament. However, it does not seem that the regiment had publicly given reasons for its refusal.[877]

Two cases of mutiny are particularly significant, anticipating some of the future developments of the army movement. One occurred in July 1646 in Nantwich, where five hundred men of the garrison mutinied about pay and imprisoned the members of the Sequestration Committee. They also elected representatives to negotiate on their behalf. As the New Model agitators would do in 1647, these agents made it understood that if public authorities did not grant their request the soldiery would have to provide for themselves.[878]

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874 Manning, *Politics, Religion,* p. 122.

875 *CSPD 1644-1645,* p. 8 (October 3, 1644) p. 84 (October 30, 1644) p. 205 (December 31, 1644) pp. 266-267 (January 21, 1645).

876 C*SPD 1644-1645,* p. 331 (March 1, 1645). Other similar episodes are reported in *HMC, Portland MSS I,* pp. 255, 259, 260 (August 1645). *Mercurius Civicus,* N° 117 (August 14-21, 1645) BL, E 397 (14) p. 1132.

877 *CSPD 1645-1647,* p. 499, (December 24, 1646).

878 Cf. "The Humble Petition of the Souldiers of the Army" in *Two Letters of Sir Thomas Fairfax;* Morrill, *Nature,* p. 344.

The other episode happened in March 1645, just when the New Model was being raised. A Horse regiment in Buckinghamshire mutinied and abandoned its quarters, wandering for a period around the countryside. These soldiers, however, did not just desert and plunder the country. They remained together and established new rules of common living, which partly modified the traditional military hierarchical system. The new *Laws and Ordinances of War* which they devised provided for a council of war, permanently sitting, to regulate all common affairs. As in the official army, total obedience was due to this council, and whoever opposed its orders was liable to death. As in the army tradition, then, a rigorous discipline was established. Those who marched in a disorderly manner or left the ranks during the march were shot. This clause was taken, as we have seen, from an analogous one in Essex's Articles of War. As in Essex's code, indiscriminate plunder on part of individuals was punished.[879] At the same time, however, the troops would look to the local population for their maintenance.[880]

Nevertheless, this council of war differed in some respects from traditional ones. It is not clear by what criteria it had been formed. However, it was alleged that there were no officers among the mutineers; only a few corporals. Therefore, the council must have included mostly common soldiers. Besides, the chief commander of the regiment, elected by the council, was not a permanent appointment. It was renewed every day, making possible a continual alternation of the commanders. In this way many, if not all, equally shared decision-making.[881] For these aspects, the council of war of the mutineers seems to foreshadow the future General Council of the army.

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879 Cf. *Laws and Ordinances,* in Firth, *Cromwell's Army,* art I, II, IV p. 414, art XVIII p. 416.

880 *Perfect Passages* N° 20 (March 5-11, 1645) BL, E 258 (34) pp. 154-155.

881 *Perfect Passages,* p. 154; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer,* N° 90 (March 4-11, 1645) BL, E 273 (2) pp. 720-721.

The reason for this mutiny is not clear, but apparently it was not lack of pay. The *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* mentions "pretended distastes" which would have drawn the soldiers to rebel. It adds that, following these incidents, they began to refuse to be subject to their superiors.[882] This information is in accordance with the creation of a self-governing council of war. Parliament addressed an ultimatum to the mutineers. It promised them pardon if they agreed to return to their quarters and resume their duties. Otherwise they would be proceeded against as rebels, and punished with death. The soldiers agreed to submit and received two weeks' pay in advance.[883]

Political consciousness

Throughout the civil war period, there are a number of testimonies of some kind of political consciousness from members of parliamentary armies. One of them belongs to the very beginning of the war. In August 1642, after declaring war against Parliament, Charles I began to recruit men in Yorkshire. Not having initially sufficient forces to practise impressment, he offered sums of money to those who enlisted. He addressed himself mostly to the already existing Trained Bands. The majority of this corps, however, refused, declaring that "they would not fight against their brethren." These soldiers identified the forces of Parliament as "their brethren," their party.[884]

A very politically conscious member of the army is of course Cromwell. In April 1645, he wrote to Parliament to congratulate it on the creation of the new modelled army. On this occasion, he also complained about the accusations of factiousness made against it, but he did not deny

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882 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer*, p. 721.

883 *C.J.*, IV, p. 70 (March 5, 1645); p. 78 (March 14, 1645).

884 *H.M.C., Verney Papers*, p. 440 (August 29, 1642).

the factiousness as such. On the contrary, he stated that he was willing "to be of that faction that desires to avoid the oppression of the poor people of this miserable Nation".[885] At that time, Cromwell seems also to have held radical social convictions. According to both Robert Baillie and Denzil Holles, he was against aristocracy and the House of Lords.[886] Major Huntington, one of his officers, reported that he promoted amongst his soldiers the idea that "every single man" in the state had both the capacity and the right to judge what the common welfare consisted of .[887] According to an ally of the Earl of Manchester, he once had publicly declared that God would sweep away the king and the lords. He was against both of them because He did not want masters over His people.[888] Cromwell here seems to refuse, for religious reasons, a society based on the master-servant relationship. However, it must be taken into account that he is talking of "God's people" rather than the people in general.

Another committed soldier was John Lilburne, lieutenant-colonel in Manchester's army until April 1645. At one point during the war, he was captured by the royalists, taken to Oxford and tried for treason. At the trial, although pressed and threatened with death, he refused to recant his support for Parliament and swear allegiance to the king. He vindicated his engagement in the war as a personal decision, motivated by a conviction of the righteousness of the cause he was defending. He had acted out of a sense of duty; but a duty first of all towards himself, his conscience, even before that towards Parliament and his country. Such a duty was the defence of freedom, both his own and that of all the

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885 Abbott, *Writings and Speeches,* I, p. 344.

886 Baillie, *Letters and Journals,* II, p. 76; "Memoirs of Denzil Lord Holles" in Maseres, *Select Tracts,* p. 201.

887 Maseres, *Select Tracts,* p. 406.

888 Bruce, Masson, *Manchester's Quarrell,* p. 75.

other subjects. Lilburne defended with weighty arguments the justness of Parliament's proceeding. Moreover, during his captivity, he worked to encourage the same kind of consciousness among his fellow-prisoners.[889] Lilburne, radical pamphleteer and future Leveller leader, cannot be seen as representative of the political tendencies of the average soldier. Yet his very militant commitment in the war must have drawn him to try and form a political consciousness among his fellow soldiers.

Other testimonies of such a consciousness come from unknown officers and soldiers. In March 1644 Robert Baldwin, a lay preacher, was arrested for preaching unauthorised doctrines. From prison, he petitioned Parliament, asking for his release. He had, he wrote, volunteered for Parliament from the beginning, even accepting not to be paid for a whole summer. Like Lilburne, had felt a moral duty to fight. His objectives were the official ones of Parliament: defence of the Houses and of the liberties of the subjects. However, Baldwin made use of a term which did not appear in parliamentary declarations: "freeborn subjects." He apparently anticipated Lilburne and the other Levellers in the use of this expression. For him too, freedom was not just something granted to the subjects by the constitution, by the tradition of the land, but something that belonged to them by inherent right.[890] It is also interesting that Baldwin, like the New Model movement would do later, reminded Parliament of its own justifications for the war. These justifications now seemed to be forgotten by the Houses, which suppressed freedom of expression.[891]

Captain John Hodgson, a parliamentary officer, in his memoirs described his involvement in the war as a meditated choice, inspired by

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889 J. Lilburne, *The Freeman's Freedome Vindicated* (1646) BL, E 341 (12) p. 9; M.A. Gibb, *John Lilburne the Leveller* (London 1948) pp. 92-93..

890 HLRO, "Main Papers", fo 143 (March 26, 1644).

891 "Main Papers", passim

religious convictions. He had taken up arms against the king, answering Fairfax's appeal for volunteers in West Riding, sure to "put his hand to the Lord's work". Before making his decision, he had spent hours in prayer and meditation, trying to understand if this was what God wanted from him[892]. Hodgson certainly represents a case of conscientious soldier. He apparently felt his participation in the conflict as a religious, not a political duty in itself. Yet for him "God's work" consisted in fighting against his lawful sovereign.

In 1649 Chistopher Chisman, cornet in Cromwell's New Model regiment during the civil war, recalled the reasons for which he had engaged for Parliament. He referred to the official justifications given by the Houses for the war: "the preservation of the lives, proprieties and liberties of the people." However, he did not mention at all at least two of the objectives they had indicated: the defence of the person of the king and of the privileges of Parliament itself. It is true that in 1649 such objectives must have appeared obsolete. Nonetheless, it may also be that the liberties of the subjects were what really counted for Chisman, when he decided to fight with Parliament. This hypothesis seems confirmed by the emphasis Chisman put on his opposition to arbitrariness, not only in the king but in any ruler whatsoever. Echoing Cromwell, Chisman described the parliamentary army as made of conscientious men, who chose to join Parliament out of a "sound judgement". This was not true for the whole army, but it very probably was for Chisman.[893]

In 1644 Edward Symmons, chaplain in the royalist army, published a pamphlet against the parliamentary preacher Stephen Marshall. In this work, Symmons criticised the kind of propaganda that the latter spread, bending the Scriptures to serve his party purposes. He accused Marshall

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892 W. Sheils, "Provincial Preaching", in Fletcher, Roberts, *Religion,* p. 311.

893 C. Chisman, *The Lamb Contending with the Lion* (July 10, 1649) BL, E 563 (10) "An Epistle to all Influential and Unbyassed people of England," 1st p.

of misleading Parliament's followers, stirring them up to violence and instilling in them false political-religious views. To demonstrate his point, Symmons reported an exchange of opinions he had had with parliamentary soldiers some time before. The latter seemed to have been corrupted by the propaganda of Marshall, whom they had quoted as an authority to justify their struggle against the king. The soldiers belonged to the regiment of Sir Robert Harley in Essex's army. This, by the way, shows that the Eastern Association was not the only corps characterised by political-religious radicalism.[894]

Symmons tried to persuade the soldiers of their fault, in taking up arms against their lawful sovereign. They did not claim a right as such to rebel against him. They explained that they were not fighting him but popery, which represented the Antichrist. It was the latter, not the king, that they wanted to overthrow. However, Antichrist for them was not incarnated in the Church of Rome only, as for Symmons, but in that of England and its bishops; Christ's followers had the duty to fight against them as well, and against anybody who supported them. Although the soldiers did not say it explicitly, this meant resisting the king, since he supported bishops.[895]

Another disagreement in interpretation between the chaplain and Essex's men is significant. For the former, the task to defeat Antichrist belonged first of all to sovereigns. They might ask the people to assist them, but it must be the rulers who give the authorisation. For the soldiers, on the contrary, this task belonged to the people as much as to the king. Both had a warrant for this in the words of the Revelation.

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894 E. Symmons, *Scripture Vindicated* (Oxford 1644) BL, E 414 (17): Preface to the Readers, 1st, 3rd pp.

895 ibid, Epistle, 1st –2nd pp.

Moreover, like the Levellers later, by people they meant the undifferentiated multitude, the whole nation, not just the "best part".[896]

When Symmons asked them by what authority they justified their rebellion, the soldiers indicated three. The first two justifications – Parliament's command and the approbation of many learned ministers – still refer to a superior authority. The third, however, is an authorisation "from below": God's voice in the heart of all His people, which stirs up many to undertake the same work. Here, two complementary sources of authority are indicated: individual conscience and collective participation. On one hand there is the common consent, on the other hand, one's own personal judgement. Of course the first source of authority is God. However, he directly addresses individuals, without passing through the intermediation of worldly institutions.[897]

Finally, it is interesting that these soldiers wanted to debate with the chaplain, while remaining steady in their position. They asked Symmons to stay and discuss with them, even to pray together.[898] The idea of common discussion and prayer as a means to reach the truth together would characterise also the General Council of the New Model. These soldiers already appear in some way politicised, although they express their convictions in religious-millenarian terms.

In March 1645, on the eve of the creation of the New Model, an army officer was called before the Lords to answer about a "scandalous" pamphlet. The officer, Captain Thomas Awdley, was accused of writing an article hostile to the king in an issue of the newsbook *Britannicus.* The Lords ordered it to be seized, imprisoned the printer and called Awdley to the bar. The latter's attitude there, however, somewhat puts in doubt

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896 Symmons, *Scripture Vindicated,* Epistle, passim; Hill, *Antichrist*, pp. 79-80., Wootton, *Divine Right*, pp. 49-51.

897 Symmons, *Scripture Vindicated,* Epistle, 2nd p.

898 ibid, Epistle, 3rd p

the strength of his commitment. He denied having written the article, declaring that he had only arranged to have it printed. He also admitted that the passage concerning the king was offensive, and therefore should not have been published. The Lords pardoned him, but on condition that he would no longer busy himself with publications.[899] In spite of his recantation, this represents an early case of open opposition to the king within the parliamentary army. Cromwell too was to recall in 1647 that at the time of the taking of Exeter there were already in the New Model some officers critical towards the king and monarchy as such. He mentioned colonel Lambert in particular.[900]

A critical attitude towards the existing order appears also in a manuscript pamphlet, probably written in 1644, preserved among the Lords' papers. It is entitled "Loose Notions of Conduct for the War". It is anonymous, so it cannot be attributed with certainty to an army member. However, the knowledge the author shows of military strategy and technical problems makes it likely that he belonged to the army. The proposals he made mostly concerned the conduct of the war. However, he also touched on political matters. He expressed the conviction that it was the king who had to offer negotiations first. Besides, the negotiations had to be with all Parliament, to avoid "private accommodations", with the conferment of particular privileges on some. The author of the pamphlet observed that his position could be considered as tending to anarchy. It could be said to be tending to reduce the role of aristocracy and enhance that of the gentry and even common people. While he did not claim such an objective, the author did not seem worried by such a prospect, either: he was against any privilege, or "private preferment".[901]

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899 *L.J.*, VII, p. 267 (March 10, 1645); p. 272 (March 13, 1645); pp. 525, 528 (August 5-6, 1645); p. 539 (August 15, 1645).

900 Maseres, *Select Tracts*, p. 356.

901 *HMC, Main Papers*, p. 41.

In April 1644 Sylvanus Taylor, sergeant-major in the regiment of Sir James Harrington, was called to the bar of the House of Lords. He was accused of publicly expressing doubts about the loyalty of Essex to Parliament and criticising the latter's way of conducting recruitment for the war. He was alleged to have said that entrusting the Lord General with an army of twenty thousand would be for Parliament the same as giving him a sword to cut their throats. It would mean offering soldiers for the king's army. These statements were made at a meeting of the Committee of Common Council at Cooper's Hall, to discuss the recruitment and payment of twenty thousand men for Essex's army. Three witnesses confirmed the accusation.[902] Here, we have an early case of questioning of a superior by a subaltern, with broader political motivations.

In the ensuing Autumn, Sir William Waller wrote to Parliament about divisions and disagreements within his army, particularly among the soldiery. Waller did not specify the nature and the objects of these divisions. He seems to have been vague on purpose. He appeared quite concerned about the risk that these divisions might weaken the parliamentary front, and so unwilling to describe them in detail.[903] When Waller was writing, the army was in a particularly critical moment, after the defeat at Lostwithiel. It is therefore likely that the disagreements among its members concerned the way to conduct the war. However, as we have seen, the differences of opinion on this subject could involve wider political issues.[904]

In the ensuing winter Colonel Massie, writing to the Committee of both Kingdoms, hinted with disapproval at the presence of "Independent

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902 HLRO, "Main Papers" (April 25-26, 1644) fo 91, 94, 97, 102-103.

903 d`Ewes, fo 118 bis (September 1644).

904 Cf. above, pp. 71-74.

officers" in the army. He remarked that they could prove harmful rather than useful to the nation.[905]

The most substantial testimonies about the politics of the army come, as usual, from Edwards and Baxter. In September 1646, three months after the end of the war, the soldiers in Northamptonshire were beginning to manifest precise political positions. The soldiers argued that they had fought for freedom and would not suffer themselves to be put again in a condition of slavery. Their participation in the war, therefore, seems to have been the consequence of a personal commitment, not just of obedience to Parliament. Besides, such a commitment was not considered already fulfilled with the end of the war. It was to be continued after, to ensure that the objective of the war, freedom, should be really attained. Moreover, echoing Leveller literature, the Northamptonshire soldiers argued that Parliament had been created by the people, and was accountable to them for its actions.[906] An army colonel, too, believed that the sovereignty originally belonged to the people. As a consequence, if the latter had so decided, they would have been free to abolish both king and Parliament and devise a different type of government. A soldier of Colonel Hammond's regiment declared that the true Parliament was represented by the House of Commons alone, without the Lords.[907]

The same colonel and another soldier expressed themselves against the Irish expedition not for reasons of internal politics, but out of solidarity with the rights of the Irish people, who also had a right to liberty of conscience and political self-determination.[908] Such speeches

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905 *CSPD 1644-1645,* p. 302 (February 12, 1645).

906 Edwards, G*angraena* III, p. 21.

907 ibid, pp. 23, 174.

908 ibid, p. 23.

seem to foreshadow the motivations of those soldiers who, in the Spring of 1649, opposed the Irish expedition on principle.[909]

According to Baxter, this type of political consciousness spread in the New Model from the Summer of 1645; at least in Rich's, Whalley's and Fairfax's regiments. There a part, though small, of the soldiers already questioned the role in the state not only of the king, but of the aristocracy and gentry. They saw in both an instrument of oppression and arbitrary power which they, like the Levellers, identified with the Norman conquest.[910] Besides, Baxter saw a correspondence between the political opinions and the religious tendencies of these soldiers. They fostered democracy in the church as well as in the state. They opposed the Presbyterian covenant not only because it was against liberty of conscience, but because it compelled them to profess allegiance to the king.[911]

Baxter found the same correspondence between politics and religion among an even more extremist wing of those radicals, concentrated in Major Bethel's troop. Religious heterodoxy went together with political subversion. On the one hand, there was the refusal to accept any institutional church, a questioning of Scripture itself, the defence of free will and universal redemption. On the other hand, there was the rejection of monarchy and of any type of government which did not include the mass of the people.[912]

However, the radical members of the army did not always support the rights of the people at large. When they argued that the king had to be

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909 *The Souldiers Demands* (Bristol 1649) BL, E556 (15); Brailsford, *Levellers*, pp. 508-509.

910 On this subject cf Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, pp. 75-82.

911 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, pp. 50-51, 53.

912 ibid, pp. 53-54.

put under control to secure the country, it was not clear whether it was the subjects' control or the soldiers' only. While defending the rights of the nation, they also claimed a power to subjugate it by force of arms. The minister who reported these speeches remarked that they cared for their own freedom but not for that of all others. Perhaps there is some exaggeration in this statement. Yet it shows that, as it will be later in the army movement, part of its members were more interested in the rights of the soldiers than in England's freedom in general.[913] Finally, there is a pro-army testimony to the level of politicization of the New Model in August 1646. It comes from Hugh Peters, in a pamphlet which, among other things, praised that army. Peters proposed employing the New Model not only in the traditional task of defending the country by arms, although he considered this indispensable. Its soldiers, however, would be even more useful in carrying out a work of political education of the mass of the people. They would be those best able to "teach peasants to understand liberty".[914]

These episodes show that an awareness of the political motivations of the war, and a wider concern for political issues was present, at least in part of the army, before March 1647. However, such a consciousness was in general in accordance with Parliament's official objectives. It did not imply a criticism of the policy carried out by the Houses, or of Parliament as an institution. The cases reported by Baxter and Edwards, on the other hand, do indicate the presence of such a criticism. However, since their testimony is not backed by other sources, it cannot be accepted without reservation.

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913 Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae,* p. 51; Edwards, *Gangraena* III, pp. 21-22; Woodhouse, *Puritanism,* p. 30.

914 Peters, *Mr Peters' Last Report,* p. 6; Hill, *World Turned Upside Down,* p. 47.

Early army petitions

The New Model army as such did not address petitions, to Parliament or its superiors, until the end of March 1647. However, during all the civil war period, many other parliamentary armies did so: from garrisons to provincial forces to Essex's and Waller's corps. As we have seen[915], the New Model was associated with some of these forces.

Actually, the custom of petitioning authority seems to have been relatively common at the time even among other armed forces. There are cases of petitions emanating from the Scottish and even the royalist army.[916]

Many of the army petitions came from individuals, and both in tone and content were petitions of grace, but there were also collective petitions which claimed rights. Usually it was the officers who addressed them to Parliament, also speaking on behalf of the soldiers. Yet there are a few petitions framed and subscribed by the soldiery only.

The first of these even precedes the civil war, and emanates from what was still then the king's army. In October 1641, the men under the command of Sir Thomas and Sir Charles Lucas addressed several petitions to the Commons. They openly criticised the conduct not only of these officers but of the Lord General himself. The reasons for the protest were strictly economic and professional. Both the Lord General and their direct commanders had taken away from the soldiery part of their pay, assigning it for the purchase of horses, equipment etc; this despite the fact that the horses at least were a gift by the king to the troops. In

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915 Cf. above, p. 80; Kishlansky, *Rise*, p. 61.

916 "To His Excellency the Earl of Leven. The Petition of all the Officers and Soldiers under Your Excellencies' Command" (June 11, 1646) in Rushworth, *Historical Collections,* VI, pp. 302-304: *L.J.,* VIII, pp. 412-413 (June 29, 1646); "The Humble Peticion of Your Majesties Old Horse" (August 8, 1644) in Symonds, *Marches of the Royal Army,* pp. 106-107.

addition, the soldiers asked to be free to leave the country.[917] There is no reference to wider political issues, neither is there a questioning of the role of superiors as such. Nevertheless, the petition is still an example of challenge towards the highest commands made by the rank and file of the army.

Unlike what was to happen later, especially after the war, the Commons received the remonstrance favourably. A special committee was appointed, which dedicated a whole day to studying the case, also consulting with the Lords. The petitioners were then invited to come to the committee, to receive the answer directly from its members.[918] It is true that the Commons did not grant the soldiers' requests, except that of being able to leave the country. The other requests actually pertained to the king or the Lords. However, the committee assured the soldiers that they would use their influence with both institutions in order to solve the grievances expressed in the petition.[919] Such goodwill on part of Parliament may have encouraged some army members to be bolder in their requests later.

In 1644, the men of Colonel Duckenfield's regiment mutinied. They threatened to disband if they were compelled to march out of their county. On that occasion, they addressed a petition to their commander, explaining their reasons. The men under Colonel Michael Jones, who complained about their arrears, did the same. As the New Model soldiers would do, they declared that, in case their requests were not granted, they would provide for themselves to get some satisfaction; even, it was

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917 *The Heads of Severall Petitions, delivered by the Troopers against the Lord Generall and other Officers of the Army* (October 5, 1641) BL, E 172 (14), pp. 1-2.

918 ibid, p. 2.

919 ibid, p. 5.

implied, without or against the orders of their superiors. Like the New Model agitators, they appealed to the natural right of self-preservation.[920]

The same issues were raised by the soldiers of Major-General Mitton, during the revolt of the Nantwich garrison in July 1646. On this occasion, they addressed a petition to the county committee, claiming their arrears. They, too, expressed the intention to provide for themselves by any means necessary, appealing to the natural right of every man to ensure for himself what he needs to live.[921]

In 1645, the troopers of Sir John Norwich, in the Eastern Association, petitioned Parliament asking for part of their arrears. Their tone was humble. They "prayed" Parliament to provide in some way, not even asking for a complete payment. On the other hand, they reminded Parliament that they had expected their arrears for forty-six weeks, and had served the Houses for a long time. Apart from this, the very fact that soldiers had taken on their own the initiative to address Parliament is significant.[922]

In 1646, the troopers serving under Captain Otway petitioned the Warwickshire county committee requesting their arrears. These soldiers did not ask for concessions. They made it clear that the arrears were something due to them, so if they had not received them, they must have been defrauded.[923] At Christmas of 1646, some of the soldiers under Colonel Massie petitioned the Commons for their arrears. Probably the latter did not respond, because in February 1647 the soldiers addressed Parliament again. This time they did not confine themselves to presenting the petition, but assembled before Westminster, pressing the members to

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920 Morrill, *Nature,* pp. 341-342.

921 Tanner MSS vol. 59, fo 412.

922 *HMC, Main Papers,* p. 90, year 1645.

923 *CSPD 1645-1647,* p. 502 (1646).

grant their request. The Commons immediately set apart a sum to pay them. At the same time, however, they ordered Massie to disband them, and make sure that they would not disturb Parliament again.[924] Such a resolution in reclaiming pay may have been an encouragement for the New Model.

The most interesting example of a petition by the rank and file comes from the men under Sir Samuel Luke, quartered in Northamptonshire. In April 1645, they petitioned their commander, asking for their pay. Their request did not differ from many others coming from the army in the same period. However, their remonstrance also had some peculiar characteristics, which made it closer to the New Model petitions.

First of all, it is perhaps a unique case of a petition by the soldiers which is signed. It bears forty-one signatures. However, the authors do not present themselves as "some soldiers" but as " the soldiers" under Luke's command. Although this is not specified, it seems that the soldiers who have signed have spoken also on behalf of their comrades. In some way, they have acted as agitators.[925] The attitude towards their superior also recalls that of the New Model in 1647. Luke's men, too, appear very aware of their rights, even as soldiers, starting with that of receiving pay for their service. While they proclaim their obedience to superiors in all military matters, they show themselves very critical about the proceedings of their commander. They go as far as judging them ,"except speedily redressed," to prove "very disadvantageous to the state". They subscribe themselves their commander's "obedient soldiers," but specifying "in all lawful commands". It is implied that there might be

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924 *C.J.,* V, p. 28 (December 25, 1646); p. 75 (February 4, 1647); *L.J.,* VIII, p. 705, (February 4, 1647); p. 719 (February 10, 1647).

925 Ellis, *Original Letters,* 3rd series, IV, pp. 235-236.

some unlawful commands they are not prepared to obey.[926] Such a definition resembles closely that use by the New Model soldiers to their officers in their first apology: "Your servants so far as we may".[927]

Like the New Model soldiers, then, those of Luke show attention, even sympathy for the needs of the civilian population. It is true that they fear that the people in the area might "rise and cut their throats"; or even ally themselves with the enemy, as a means to be freed from their burdens. However, these soldiers are also aware of the injustice the local people are suffering, forced to maintain the troops without any financial help from the state. Their condition is compared to the oppression suffered by the Jews in Egypt under the Pharaoh, who charged them with impossible tasks. The soldiers manifestly sympathise with these civilians; they see a similarity between the situation of the latter and their own, as the New Model was to do.[928] The main difference between this remonstrance and the petitions of the army movement is that here the action of Parliament is not questioned. On the contrary, the soldiers talk of appealing to it to obtain justice.[929] However, two years later, the problems of the New Model were to come from the decisions of Parliament itself. Then, there would no longer be a superior authority to appeal to. The army members would have to search for a solution for their problems by themselves.

Among the petitions emanating from the officers, the first significant one was that of Essex's Infantry in December 1644. Although respectful in tone, it did not pray for concessions. It demanded something

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926 ibid, pp. 234, 235.

927 *An Apollogie of the Souldiers to all their Commission Officers,* p. 2.

928 Ellis, *Original Letters,*3rd series, IV pp. 234-235. For the New Model, see above, pp. 56-57.

929 ibid, p. 235.

which had to be granted for a matter of justice. It is understandable that Whitelocke considered it a forerunner of the petitions of the New Model two years later.[930] The authors of the petition, like Luke's soldiers, did not refer only to the problems of the army, but also to those of civilians, putting them in relation with each other. Since the troops were not sufficiently paid or supplied, they had to live off civilians, which discouraged many people from supporting Parliament. Essex's officers certainly complained also about the loosening of discipline, the spreading of unruly behaviour among soldiers. Yet they imputed these evils not to them but to negligence in high places, which forced soldiers to steal to sustain themselves. The petitioners even justified the desertion of many officers and soldiers from the army as motivated by reasons of conscience, to avoid living illegally. This is perhaps the first case of defence of an act of conscientious disobedience by army members.[931]

Essex's officers then made detailed requests to Parliament. The first step was to pay half of the arrears at once, issuing receipts as a guarantee for the payment of the other half. Besides, Parliament should find a system of paying the troops regularly. In this directive attitude towards Parliament, the petition of Essex's Infantry anticipates the first one of the New Model.[932]

What is most significant, this is the only petition actually delivered to Parliament before March 1647 to contain a specific political reference. The officers mentioned the cause they had undertaken to defend, the objectives they pursued: vindicating the true religion, supporting the liberties of the subjects and restoring the privileges of Parliament itself.

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930 Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 123.

931 "Petition of the Colonels and other chief-officers of the Lord General's Infantry," HLRO, "Main Papers" (December 21, 1644) fo 102; *HMC, Main Papers,* p. 38.

932 "Petition of … Lord General's Infantry," passim; *HMC, Main Papers* passim. For the first petition of the New Model, cf. below, pp. 311-313.

As we can see, their avowed objectives were still in accordance with those of Parliament. Another interesting aspect of this document is in the signatures. It was subscribed by future militants in the movement of 1647 (Thomas Pride, John Clarke, William Goffe). However, it was also signed by moderate Presbyterians (Colonels Richard Fortescue, Edward Aldrich and Henry Barclay).[933] The petition tells Parliament what to do, but also calls for discipline and a good religious education for the soldiers. It appears to be torn between two different ways of conceiving the organisation of the army and its relationship with authorities.

Another interesting case of a petition by officers comes in February 1645 from Manchester's army. For once, it was not concerned with arrears or other material problems. It was a request to Parliament to keep Manchester as commander of the parliamentary army. Such requests on the part of the soldiery were not unusual. However, in that period Parliament was discussing the Self Denying Ordinance and a new modelling of the army. The petition therefore might sound like a veiled criticism of parliamentary proceedings. The more interesting aspect, however, is in the way in which the petition was framed. The initiative was taken by an inferior officer, Captain O'Neale, who organised a meeting of the officers of his garrison, to read them a draft of the paper, ask their opinion about it and eventually have it signed. It is a proceeding very similar to that adopted in the army movement in the autumn of 1647.[934] All the officers summoned, except two, gave their assent, but on condition that the petition would be withdrawn if it proved unlawful or disrespectful towards Parliament. It seems, however, that the paper never

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933 "Petition of … Lord General's Infantry," passim; Temple, "Original Officers List", p. 55, fn 29, p. 60, fn 73, p. 57, fn 47, p. 61, fn 85, p. 59, fn 71.

934 Cf. the Putney debates, in *CP.*, I. See, for example, the discussion on the Agreement of the People at pp. 299-367.

reached the Houses, although they were informed by other sources about it, and started an investigation of the matter.[935]

There are other petitions with interesting features. In 1644, the officers and soldiers under the Earl of Denbigh addressed the House of Lords. They complained that they had not been paid for a long time, and threatened to disband in case they still did not receive their pay. The Lords promptly ordered one thousand pounds for them, acknowledging the excellent service performed by the regiment.[936] The case of Denbigh's regiment is opposed and complementary to that of the New Model, which was to refuse to disband until paid. However, as we will see, the reaction of Parliament that time would be different.

In April 1645 the officers of Waller's army, in course of disbandment, petitioned Parliament for their arrears. This petition is in between the model "of grace" and that "of right." The officers lament their sad condition, their being reduced to a mere subsistence, the debts they have been forced to contract. From this point of view it seems that they are begging for help. However, they also remind Parliament that they have earned their wages by the constant accomplishment of their duty, even in hard conditions. They remark, as an injustice, that the other two armies, those of Essex and Manchester, have already got their arrears. Waller's officers point out that "as they have undergone equal duty, and performed equal service" they have a right to be equally considered with the other two armies. Here we can perceive a veiled criticism of Parliament, which has not dealt justly with them. Moreover, while the officers assure Parliament of their submission, they point out that they need some pay to be enabled to perform their service. Implicitly, they make their obedience conditional. Yet Parliament did not consider the petition mutinous. On the contrary, it took steps to ensure

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935 *CSPD 1644-1645,* p. 325 (February 28, 1645).

936 *L.J.,* VII, pp.23, 24 (October 14, 1644).

that Waller's men be given two weeks' arrears immediately, reserving to themselves to pay the rest later.[937]

In July 1645 Captain John Treife, commanding a Foot company in the garrison of Plymouth, wrote to the Lords. He said that he had been arrested by the local council of war, but had requested to be tried by Parliament. He complained that he was being kept under arrest without charge or trial. He asked to be tried and eventually released, to be able to return to service. This is only an individual petition, referring to a specific matter. However, this officer demonstrates an awareness of his rights and of correct legal proceedings that reminds of the protests of the New Model in 1647.[938]

In September 1645 the two regiments of the Gloucester garrison petitioned Parliament, claiming their arrears. The petition was subscribed by nineteen officers, also on behalf of their soldiers. They emphasised that they had been waiting for their arrears for a long time and this prolonged delay had caused them many problems. The officers had been forced to sacrifice their salaries to ensure the maintenance of their soldiers, who had had to live in great straits anyway. Like the New Model in its first petition, these officers pointed out the patience and goodwill demonstrated, in refraining from resorting to Parliament for two years. They had done this out of fidelity towards the Houses. Now, however, it was implied, the latter had a duty to provide for the garrison. Finally, they explicitly requested Parliament to use the contribution of Berkeley Castle to pay them. In practice they indicated the steps to be taken.[939]

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937 *Perfect Passages*, N° 26 (April 16-23, 1645) BL, E 260 (20), pp. 101-102.

938 *L.J.*, VII, p. 502 (July 19, 1645).

939 *To the right hon the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses assembled in Parliament. The Humble Petition of the two Regiments of Foot, of the Garrison of Gloucester,* (1645?) BL, 102 a 1, pp. 1-3; *HMC, Main Papers* (September 23, 1645) pp. 77-78.

To the petition was annexed a remonstrance by the militia of Gloucester's garrison. The latter reiterated the basic request of the former: that the contributions of the garrison of Berkeley be used to pay Gloucester's regiments. However, it was both more assertive in tone and implicitly critical towards Parliament's proceedings. Berkeley's contribution was something that belonged to Gloucester's garrison, that was justly due to them. Parliament was reminded of its own ordinances, until then not respected, although only in relation to Gloucester. Finally, Parliament was implicitly accused of not acting equitably, granting greater favours to other forces. These petitions seem to have had some effect, since the Houses immediately set aside five hundred pounds to pay the regiments.[940]

In March 1646, the officers and soldiers of Windsor's garrison asked Parliament for their arrears, which amounted to ninety weeks. They did not confine themselves to requesting their pay. They also indicated where Parliament could find the money: the lands and other resources of the Dean and Canons. Again, as in the New Model's first petitions, Parliament is instructed what to do. However the Lords, who first received the petition, did not resent it, but particularly recommended it to the Commons, who ordered the sale of the statues and other ornaments of the castle to pay the garrison.[941]

Directions to Parliament about the steps to be taken were given also by a group of demobilised officers who petitioned for their arrears in December 1646. They even specified that the manner of payment devised by Parliament was ineffective, and explicitly requested that their

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940 "The Humble Remonstrance of the Militia of the Garrisons of Gloucester" in *To the right hon the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses,* p. 8; *HMC, Main Papers,* p. 77.

941 *L.J.,* VIII, p. 247 (March 31, 1646); *C.J.,* IV, p. 502 (April 6, 1646).

directions be followed. However, it does not seem that the Houses complained of a breach of their privileges.[942]

There is also an example of a petition asking for an indemnity for acts committed by army members under the necessity of war. It was addressed to the Commons in October 1646 by a number of officers of the London Militia and of other garrisons in the country, also on behalf of their soldiers. The acts for which an indemnity was requested mostly concerned the requisition of goods of civilians, who had then resorted to courts to have satisfaction. It is another request that, a few months later, the army movement would make to Parliament. The petitioners here are generally submissive in tone, "humbly praying" the House to intervene in their help. At the same time, however, they remind Parliament of its own declarations at the beginning of the war, although only in relation to the matter of indemnity. The Commons at once appointed a committee to draft an ordinance of indemnity.[943]

In some cases, also, petitions were framed jointly by army members and civilians, again showing a co-operation between the two. In March 1645 both the town and the garrison of Plymouth asked Parliament for an adequate maintenance. The petition was delivered to the Commons by representatives of both groups, the county sheriff and a captain. Parliament ordered that the Sunday collection in churches be destined for the maintenance of Plymouth.[944] In October 1646, the Commons received an even more "mixed" petition, subscribed by a minister, some tradesmen and ex-officers of Waller's army. The Commons appointed a committee to verify the legitimacy of the requests.[945]

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942 *Perfect Diurnall,* N° 176 (December 7-14, 1646) BL, E 513 (28) p. 1414.

943 *Perfect Diurnall,* N° 168 (October 12-19, 1646) BL, E 513 (19) pp. 1344-1345, 1348.

944 *C.J.,* IV, p. 72, 74 (March 10, 1645).

945 ibid, p 682 (October 3, 1646).

All these army petitions deal with economic or military grievances. Wider political concerns are virtually absent. From this point of view, they are quite different from the New Model manifestoes of 1647. The only exception is represented by the conclusion in the petition of Essex's Infantry. Yet even the latter, as we have seen, dealt mainly with material grievances.

However, there might be a more substantial exception. A partisan of Manchester, in the report against Cromwell, mentioned a petition which apparently had been presented to him by two soldiers of Cromwell's regiment. They has asked him to subscribe it. This petition was not about army grievances. It was an appeal to Parliament to guarantee freedom of conscience in the country at large. For the first and only time before the Spring of 1647, it dealt with a religious-political matter.[946] Moreover, with the two soldiers there was a civilian, who seems to have been involved in the petition as well. This circumstance foreshadows the collaboration of the Levellers Wildman and Petty with the New Model in the drawing up of constitutional proposals in 1647.[947] However, the fact remains that this petition never reached Parliament. Perhaps there were, as early as 1644, politicised soldiers. At this stage, however, they were not able yet to involve the majority of the army in their activism.

The appearance of the movement

On March 30, 1647, a group of officers who had volunteered for the Irish expedition informed the Lords about a petition which was being circulated in the New Model. It was addressed by the officers and soldiers of the army to Fairfax, asking him to present it to Parliament. A

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946 Bruce, Masson, *Manchester's Quarrell*, p. 75.

947 cf. [J. Wildman] *Putney Projects*; *CP*, I, p. 240.

copy of the paper was delivered to the Lords. It is the first petition of the New Model army.[948]

This tract has much more in common with the earlier petitions of other parliamentary armies than with the New Model's own later ones. There is no reference to wider political issues: not even more general ones, like the right of all subjects to petition Parliament or the struggle in defence of the subjects' freedom. The soldiers do mention the objectives of the war. However, they reduce them to "the preservation of the kingdom in the hands of Parliament", and the subduing of the latter's enemies. They also recall Parliament's own declarations of the outbreak of the war, but only in relation to the protection of the soldiers in its service.[949] Apart from this, the requests of the petitioners were strictly focused on material or military grievances. They asked for an indemnity for actions done for necessities of war; to have their arrears audited and delivered, to be kept in pay until disbanded. They also requested that the volunteers in the army would not be sent to fight out of the kingdom, and some economic assistance for sick or maimed soldiers, and widows and orphans of fallen soldiers.[950]

As we can see, the petitioners made several requests to Parliament; more than usual, perhaps. However, the requests in themselves had been already made, separately, in many army petitions between 1645-1647.[951] It is also true that the soldiers gave detailed directions to Parliament. For

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948 *Old Parliamentary History,* XV, p. 342; *L.J.,* IX, p. 114 (March 30, 1647); W. Waller, *A Vindication of his Conduct and Character* (London 1793) pp. 52-54. The petition reached Parliament only on March 30, but it was delivered to Fairfax earlier. Thomason dates it on March 21: *The Petition of the Officers and Souldiers in the Army under the Command of Sir Thomas Fairfax,* BL, E 383 (12).

949 *Old Parliamentary History,* XV, pp. 342-343.

950 ibid, pp. 343-344.

951 For petitions asking for the relief of indigent or sick soldiers, see, for example, *C.J.,* V, p. 3 (December 7, 1646); J.C.C., XL, fo 91 (April 8, 1644) fo 120 (January 16, 1645); *L.J.,* VII, p. 64 (November 14, 1644).

example, they did not just ask to have their arrears; they also specified that Parliament had to "spedily appoint" auditors to state their accounts. Besides, they did not only request an ordinance of indemnity, but also that Parliament should obtain the king's assent to it.[952] However, as we have seen, other army corps had been very specific in indicating to the Houses the measures to be taken in order to satisfy their requests. The New Model also pointed out that, during all its service, it had never disobeyed or questioned the orders of Parliament. It had not even addressed petitions to the latter, in spite of its great wants.[953] There might be in this statement a veiled hint that the soldiers would have had reasons to do so, though. However, again, other army members had emphasised in their petitions their patience and goodwill in refraining from protests.

What is really new in the case of the New Model is not the petition itself but Parliament's reaction. The latter immediately issued a declaration "of dislike" against the petition, had it published in print and sent copies to Fairfax to be distributed among the soldiers. The declaration defined the petition as mutinous and dangerous to public order and accused its authors of aiming at putting conditions on Parliament. It enjoined them to give up promoting their petition and publicly disown it, on pain of being treated not only as trouble-makers but as enemies of the state.[954]

Such a reaction seems disproportionate to the content of the petition. As we have seen, the latter was not basically different from other earlier addresses to Parliament by army members. Actually, some petitions had been even bolder. Denbigh's regiment, as we have seen, had threatened to disband if not paid. Massie's men had tumultuously

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952 *Old Parliamentary History,* XV, p. 343.

953 ibid, p. 342.

954 *Old Parliamentary History,* XV, pp. 344-345; *L.J.,* IX, p. 115 (March 30, 1647); *CSPD 1645-1647,* pp. 543-544 (March 30, 1647).

assembled before Westminster. Yet Parliament had generally not reproached the petitioners, and had usually taken some step to meet their demands. Even in the case of violent mutinies, in which state officials were held to ransom, Parliament had not reacted so vehemently. It had sent troops to reduce the mutineers, but it had never labelled the latter as enemies of the state.[955] Usually, besides, it had provided money to satisfy their needs, at least in part. In the very days of the Declaration of Dislike there was a big mutiny in the garrison of Chester. There the soldiers, who demanded their arrears, sequestered the members of the county committee and threatened to besiege the castle. Yet Parliament did not declare them enemies of the state or even disturbers of the public peace.[956]

If Parliament reacted differently to the New Model petition, it must have perceived in the initiative something more than the mere contents of the petition might suggest. The creation of the New Model had aroused a strong opposition in the House of Lords, and among the Presbyterian members of the Commons. They saw in this army a creature of the political and religious Independents, and as such potentially subversive. They had accepted it reluctantly, partly forced by the events and partly to keep a united front before the enemy.[957]

In the following two years, the religious activism of the New Model had given Parliament new reasons for alarm. Army members had continuously infringed the ordinance against lay preaching. They had challenged consecrated ministers in their pulpits, and organised alternative religious meetings. They had not just been turbulent, but had questioned, by their action, the official church, a state institution. All this

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955 Morrill, *Nature,* pp. 344-345.

956 *Moderate Intelligencer* N. 109 (April 8-15, 1647) BL, E 384 (3) p. 1018.

957 Gentles, "Choosing of Officers", pp. 279-285; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* p. 15.

must have contributed to strengthen the distrust of moderates in the Houses.

At the beginning of 1647, the Presbyterian party acquired the majority in the House of Commons. They had successfully negotiated with the Scots the withdrawal of the latter's army and the delivery of the king. This success gave them new strength in Parliament. In the same period, the Common Council of the City of London also acquired a Presbyterian majority, who maintained close contacts with that in the Commons.[958]

This political change had an influence on the decisions to be made concerning the parliamentary armies. On February 18, Parliament voted to disband part of the New Model and send the rest to relieve Ireland. Seven regiments of Foot and four of Horse would go there, with 1200 Dragoones.[959] In the same period, Parliament took a number of initiatives to enforce a stricter religious conformity, in the country in general and in the New Model in particular. On March 8, they decreed that all army officers be required not only to take the Covenant, but to swear allegiance to the church order that Parliament was to establish. On March 9, the Commons appointed a commission to prosecute all those who preached without ordination. The day after, the House called a day of fasting and humiliation against the spreading of heresies in the land.[960] Meanwhile, Parliament began to receive alarming news about the New Model.

On March 11, the county of Essex petitioned them, asking that the army be removed from the area. Their complaints did not concern only

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958 Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* pp. 25-26; Gentles, *New Model Army,* pp. 145-146.

959 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 99 (March 2-9, 1647) BL, E 378 (27) p. 45; Waller, *Vindication,* p. 42; Gentles, *New Model Army,* p. 148.

960 *C.J.,* V, p. 108 (March 8, 1647) p. 109 (March 9, 1647); Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 239; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* pp. 29-30.

the material burden the quartering of soldiers caused to the local people. The petitioners warned the House that many army members were opposed to the church order soon to be established. Therefore, they were also against Parliament, as the institution which would establish it. Moreover, they did not content themselves with opposing it personally, but carried out an active propaganda campaign to win support for their cause among the people. For the first time, the attitude of the New Model was seen as subversive not only of the church but of the state. The petitioners feared that, by approaching London, the army aimed to influence the proceedings of Parliament.[961] The Lords were alarmed by this news, and urged the Commons to remove the New Model from the vicinity of London.[962]

Another warning about the army came from London's Common Council, which also complained about the quartering of Fairfax's forces near the City, and the shortage of food and other supplies that this caused. However, as in the case of the Essex petition, they saw the presence of the army as *politically* threatening, encouraging City radicals to circulate the Levellers' Large Petition. It is significant that both the county of Essex and the City of London had proclaimed their allegiance to the Covenant and to a Presbyterian church order. In Essex's case Parliament, while thanking the petitioners, still declared its assurance of the fidelity of the army.[963]

Meantime the Committee at Derby House, which took care of Irish affairs, was charged with organising with the army commands the Irish expedition. The committee appointed four of its members to confer with

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961 *L.J.,* IX p. 72 (March 11, 1647); *Weekly Account,* N° 11 (March 10-17, 1647) BL, E 381 (3) (Thursday, March 11); Kishlansky, *Rise,* p. 187.

962 *C.J.,* V, p. 124 (March 25, 1647); *L.J.,* IX, pp. 89-90 (March 19, 1647).

963 *The Humble Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London* (March 17,1647) BL, E 381 (2); *L.J.,* IX, p. 82 (March 17, 1647); *C.J.,* V, p. 110 (March 11, 1647); Kishlansky, *Rise,* p. 189.

the army.[964] Two meetings were held at the army headquarters at Saffron Walden, on March 21 and 22. The commissioners communicated the votes of the Houses about Ireland, and asked the officers' concurrence in them. The latter all assured them that they would promote the Irish expedition among their men. Before engaging themselves, however, they submitted to Parliament four requests. They wanted to know which regiments would remain in England, and who would command the forces in Ireland. They also asked for guarantees about arrears, indemnity and future pay. Basically, these were the same grievances expressed in the New Model petition. It is not accidental that the latter was presented for the first time at Saffron Walden on this occasion.[965]

All officers agreed on the last two requests; about the two first, however, a division arose among them. Seven officers, out of the forty-four present, did not join in the second query and twelve in the first one.

At the second meeting, the commission informed the officers that the Houses had set aside sixty thousand pounds per month, to pay the Irish and English forces. However, the majority of the officers found the measure still unsatisfactory, although a minority dissociated themselves from this answer. They judged Parliament's offers fully adequate and volunteered for Ireland. These men were Captain Young and four officers of Colonel Fortescue's Regiment. All the dissenters except Rich and Awdley, who would participate in the movement, were moderate Presbyterians. They would leave the army the following June because they disagreed with its proceedings.[966]

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964 *CSPD 1645-1647,* p. 539 (March 17, 1647) p. 540 (March 18, 1647); Waller, *Vindication,* pp. 42-43.

965 *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 106 (March 18-25, 1647) BL, E 381 (16) pp. 982-983; Waller, *Vindication,* pp. 44-47; Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 240; Kishlansky, *Rise,* pp. 187-188, 190.

966 "At the Convention of Officers before his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax at Saffron Walden", in *The Petition of the Officers and Souldiers, L.J.,* IX, pp. 112-113 (March

Soon after this meeting, twenty-nine officers published a declaration in which they engaged for Ireland. They expressed their confidence that Parliament would provide for their arrears, pay and indemnity. The majority of the officers who signed this paper were also Presbyterians, and were to oppose the army movement.[967]

While the negotiations at Saffron Walden were going on, Parliament received a petition from a group of army officers, not belonging to the New Model. Like the latter, they asked to have their arrears audited and paid, and for an ordinance of indemnity for acts committed under the exigencies of war. In addition, they asked to have their debts condoned.[968] Unlike the first petition of the New Model, however, this one contained precise political requests and statements. Out of the nine queries to Parliament, three had a political content. The petitioners urged the Houses to complete the reform of the church, and to order it following the model of the other Reformed Churches. They appealed to it to respect the rights of the subject, explicitly referring to Magna Charta and the Petition of Right. Finally, they asked Parliament to abolish county committees and to call the existing ones to answer for their proceedings. The officers linked these requests to the fulfilling of the objectives Parliament had proclaimed at the beginning of the war. They therefore reminded Parliament of its own declared principles.[969] At the same time, these officers affirmed their allegiance to the Covenant

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30, 1647); Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 241; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* p. 32; Gentles, *New Model Army,* p. 150; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", pp. 13-14.

967 *L.J.,* IX, p. 114 (March 30, 1647); *CSPD 1645-1647,* p. 541 (March 22, 1647); Waller, *Vindication,* pp. 55-56; Kishlansky, *Rise,* p. 191; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 18.

968 *The humble Petition of Colonels, Lieutenant-Colonels, Majors and other Officers that have faithfully served the Great Cause of the Kingdom* (March 22, 1647) BL, E 382 (4) pp. 4-5.

969 *Petition of Colonels,* pp. 3-4.

and offered themselves for Ireland.[970] This should have won them the favour of the Presbyterian majority of the House of Commons. However, the latter resented the political references in the petition, as an intrusion into affairs on which the Houses claimed exclusive competence. They rebuked the petitioners for meddling in state matters, though at the same time accepting their material requests. The Lords, this time, declared themselves pleased with the petition, especially with the offer to serve in Ireland.[971]

When the Commons received the petition of the New Model, therefore, they had already become wary of obnoxious requests which might come from the army. Moreover, before receiving the New Model petition, Parliament came to know about it from various reports. Some of these were such as to give the impression that the army was willing to challenge Parliament's authority.

Around 20 March, some newsbooks gave information about a remonstrance being carried out among the New Model soldiers quartered in Norfolk. It was not an ordinary matter because it had provoked "some tumult" in the army headquarters. The soldiers had openly refused to go to Ireland without Fairfax as commander and without arrears. Besides, they blamed Parliament for the "jealousies" it entertained against them, wrongly considering them mutinous. Implicitly, they were professing themselves obedient, rejecting the accusations made against them in the Essex petition. Yet the anonymous correspondent from headquarters reported that the soldiers refused to be removed. He also stated that there were people who worked to stir up the army to sedition. That there was something obnoxious in the remonstrance is proved by the efforts of the army officers themselves to stop it. They managed to persuade the

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970 ibid, pp. 3,6; *L.J.,* IX, pp.95-96 (March 22, 1647).

971 *C.J.,* V, p. 120 (March 22, 1647); *L.J.,* IX, p. 93 (March 22, 1647); *Perfect Diurnall* N° 191 (March 22-29, 1647) BL, E 515 (5) p. 527.

soldiery to deliver their paper to Fairfax instead of directly to Parliament.[972] Two months later, after the movement had already started, a group of New Model officers confirmed this circumstance in one of their pamphlets. They reported that the soldiers had circulated various drafts of petitions among themselves. Some of these, at least, did not concern material grievances only. They also related to "things of divers natures" which the officers did not think fit to be presented to Parliament. Therefore, they had chosen among the several drafts of petitions the one which they judged least irritating for the Houses.[973] Although this was not explicitly stated, the "things of divers natures" the officers expunged from the petition probably related to Parliament's policy.

As we can see, the news about the New Model's remonstrance reached Parliament already charged with hints about some subversive activities within it. The Commons were informed about the petition on the same day on which they learned about the negative response of the officers concerning the Irish expedition. The commissioners of Derby House reported both matters. They had heard about the petition while staying at Saffron Walden. They mentioned "divers other circumstances and proceedings" related to the framing of the petition. This seems to suggest that the initiative implied something else, beside the usual requests.

At this point, the Commons became suspicious of the petition. They still declared their good opinion of the army, but "notwithstanding" the information they had received. Moreover, they immediately wrote to Fairfax, requiring him to prevent the further circulation of the petition.

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972 *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* N° 201 (March 16-23, 1647) BL, E 381 (9) p. 467; *Weekly Account* N° 12 (March 17-24, 1647) BL, E 381 (12) (Friday, March 19); *Perfect Diurnall* N° 190 (March 15-22, 1647) BL, E 514 (4) pp. 1525-1526; Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 240; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* p. 31; Kishlansky, *Rise,* p. 189.

973 *The Declaration of the Army,* pp. 3-4; Gentles, *New Model Army,* p.149.

They explicitly said that having it subscribed would be "of dangerous consequence".[974]

Two days later, the New Model Colonels Rossiter and Harley, both MP[s], informed the Houses that the petition was still being carried out in the army. They had known about it from anonymous letters. According to the information received by Harley, the petition had already obtained 1100 signatures. On the other hand, all Rossiter's regiment had refused to join in it, for which they received thanks from the Lords. Thomas Pride, Harley's lieutenant, was alleged to have taken the initiative to read the remonstrance to the regiment. He apparently had even threatened to cashier those who did not concur in it. The petition was requested to be returned, with the subscriptions, to commissary general Ireton, Colonels Hammond and Lilburne and the Lieutenant colonels Hammond and Grimes. These officers were therefore held responsible for the initiative and called to appear before the Commons. A committee was appointed to investigate in the circumstances of the petition.[975] Finally the Declaration of Dislike, prepared by Holles, was approved by the few members remaining in the House and transmitted to the Lords. The latter immediately gave their assent to it and had it published. They also sent the declaration to Fairfax, ordering him to have it read to the army.[976]

From these accounts, it appears that the initiative of the petition came from the officers. Waller too considered the latter responsible for organising it. He mentioned in particular Colonel Rich as exerting

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974 *C.J.,* V, p. 127 (March 27, 1647); *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 107 (March 25 -April 1, 1647) BL, E 383 (8) pp. 987, 995; Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 241; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* p. 36.

975 Clarke Mss vol. 41 (March 27, 1647); *C.J.,* V, pp. 128-129 (March 29, 1647); *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 107, pp. 995-996; *L.J.,* IX, p. 115 (March 30, 1647); Whitelocke, *Memorials,* p. 241; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* p. 37; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 19

976 *C.J.,* V, p. 129 (March 29, 1647); *L.J.,* IX, p. 111 (March 30, 1647); Gentles, *New Model Army,* p. 151.

pressure to have the petition subscribed. He agreed with Harley and Rossiter in accusing Pride, Lilburne, Hammond and Ireton of circulating it, and threatening to cashier those who did not join in it.[977]

Yet, as we have seen, the information received by the newsbooks attributed the initiative to the soldiers alone. The officers, in the *Vindication* of April and *Declaration of the Armie* of May did the same. Ireton, when questioned by the Commons, also indicated the soldiers as organisers of the petition. He did not deny the officers' intervention, but described it as an attempt to control the action of the soldiery, preventing more subversive outcomes.[978] This may be only a formal justification. However, the soldiers who wrote the *Apollogie* mentioned the petition as emanating from them and called on the officers to support them.[979] It seems therefore likely that the petition originated among the rank and file. It found considerable support among the officers, but also a tendency to restrict its scope to make it more acceptable to Parliament.

In spite of this, the Houses saw in the petition something more alarming than a mere request for arrears and indemnity. For them, it was an expression of disobedience to Parliament, a device to obstruct both disbandment and the Irish expedition. This, at least, was how Denzil Holles interpreted it. He pointed out that the two main requests of the New Model - to have their accounts audited and to obtain the royal assent to the act of indemnity - would take a long time to be satisfied. During all this time, the New Model would still be in England and not disbanded.[980] Waller interpreted in the same way the requests made by the officers at

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977 Waller, *Vindication,* pp. 51, 54-55; Kishlansky, *Rise,* p. 190.

978 Waller, *Vindication,* pp. 59-60; *Petition of the Officers,* p. 3; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", p. 11.

979 *An Apollogie of the Souldiers,* p. 1; Harrison, "Representatives and Delegates", pp. 117-118; Massarella, "Politics of the Army", pp. 10-12..

980 "Memoirs of Denzil, Lord Holles", in Maseres, *Tracts,* pp. 235-236.

Saffron Walden: they were mere pretexts to refuse the Irish expedition. He was particularly struck by the officers' insistence in refusing even after hearing Parliament's offer of financial provision.[981]

If Parliament rejected the New Model petition, it was because they perceived that the initiative entailed much more than a mere request of arrears and indemnity. It was also something more than just a refusal to disband or to go to Ireland. The New Model was preparing itself to question Parliament's policy, and not only in relation to military matters. The petition of 21 March, revised by the officers, was devoid of political references. However, in the very same days was published the soldiers' first *Apollogie*, in which they stated their political commitment.[982] The petitions issued in April, the second *Apollogie* and the *Vindication* of the officers, also contained criticism of Parliament. The officers reiterated the right of all subjects, including army members, to petition to have their grievances redressed. They made a veiled reproach to Parliament for refusing them this right.[983] The soldiers, in their letter to Skippon, blamed unknown individuals for their immediate grievances, but also accused Parliament of developing an inclination for absolute, therefore arbitrary power. They openly judged the Irish expedition a device to break the army's strength, to prevent its resistance to tyranny.[984] Again, the soldiers expressed their political commitment. Now, however, they left out not only the prerogatives of the king, but also the privileges of Parliament. Their only objective was the guarantee of the "rights and liberties of the subjects".[985] By insisting on the need to defend the right of the subject as

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981 Waller, *Vindication,* pp. 47-48.

982 Cf. above, p. 16.

983 *The Petition and Vindication of the Officers,* p. 2.

984 "The agitators to major-general Skippon", in Cary, *Memorials,* pp. 203-204.

985 "The agitators to Skippon", p. 204.

a reason for not disbanding, the army movement was making two political implications. First, Parliament did not adequately provide for those rights; and secondly, resistance against Parliament, the new highest authority, was justified. This was the real difference between the protest of the New Model and the former action of other armies.

The soldiers who extorted money from their superiors and county officials by threat; who sequestered them asking for a ransom; who pillaged and abused civilians: all were certainly disturbers of the public peace more than the New Model which, after all, was just carrying out a petitioning campaign. However, they were not enemies of the state. They had no interest in altering the existing political system. On the contrary, they needed it to work well because it guaranteed them their pay. The mutinying soldiers of Chester, in reclaiming their pay, stressed their role as Parliament's employees. The distance between them and the New Model, whose members claimed not to be mercenary soldiers, ready to serve whoever paid them, could not be greater.[986]

The army movement, though much more orderly and respectful in its mode of action, was in fact questioning the way in which state authorities operated. In this light, the programme of political reform outlined in the *Declaration* of June 14 comes as a natural development of these premises.

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986 *Moderate Intelligencer* N° 109, p.1018.

Conclusion

Not until the Spring of 1647 did the New Model become a public political participant, recognised as such by Parliament. Nor was it conceived at its creation, as we have seen, as a democratic political force. On the contrary, its function was to be purely military and its internal structure strictly traditional. Yet, at the same time, from the beginning there were factors that worked in the direction of its politicization and radicalization, both from within and from without.

On the one hand some politically conscious members, with religious or political democratic tendencies, entered the army after it was raised, as we have seen. Their very engagement in the war was motivated by the willingness to stand for "the right of the subject" and religious freedom, as opposed to the authoritarianism of the crown in both church and state. On the other hand parliamentary authorities, to justify their challenge to the sovereign and encourage the people to fight on their side, were drawn to use arguments that had libertarian and egalitarian overtones. Both ministers and military commanders emphasized the conscientious, voluntary character of joining Parliament and the fact that it was a struggle for the freedom of the governed, besides true religion. Pamphleteers argued for the consensual character of any government and the consequent right of the subjects, those who were *below,* to rise against the powers above them if they were used arbitrarily. All these forces counteracted the hierarchical, authoritarian character of military organization and of the "Ancien regime" society in general, helping the army members to develop democratic tendencies.

Without this slow, underground preparatory work, the political movement of 1647 would not have appeared or would have had a

fundamentally different character. The protest about arrears would probably have taken place anyway. However, it would not have produced a democratic internal organization or wider political objectives centred on the right of the subjects. We have seen that other troops claiming their pay had developed similar representative structures. What they lacked, however, was just this concern for democracy, both in methods and programmes. Such a concern, on the contrary, together with its religious inspiration, was the distinctive character of the movement in the New Model. Religion, too, as a justification of the struggle, was present also in other armies of the time, as we have seen. What made it so peculiar in the New Model was its link with democracy, its use to defend the right of the subject.

Finally, the case of the New Model Army suggests that although English seventeenth century society was in many respects traditional and conservative, some strong democratic elements were also present. These elements were sometimes contradictory, coexisting as we have seen with more traditional arguments, and were often expressed in an old fashioned language that tended to hide their novelty. Yet they had an autonomous value and a strength of impact that allowed them to find their way even in the military world. The army movement of 1647 is a significant outcome of these tendencies.

At the same time, the movement did not content itself with passively absorbing the libertarian and egalitarian arguments of others. It used them autonomously and creatively, applying the same principles to other situations and bringing them to their ultimate conclusions. The movement claimed for the people, towards Parliament, the very rights that the latter had claimed for them towards the king. While parliamentary pamphleteers had envisaged a reduction of the powers of the king in relation to Parliament, the army movement propounded a reduction of the powers of Parliament as well. It could not be dissolved at the king's pleasure, but it could not continue at its own pleasure, either.

Concerning its organization, the movement applied the democratic rules of debate in force in separatist congregations only for religious matters to the political sphere as well. Their concept of democracy, of the sovereignty of the people, was very close to that of the Levellers, in spite of the lack of direct Leveller influence on the movement. However, more than the Levellers the New Model members tried an immediate, practical application of this principle within their organization. Therefore, while on the one hand the army movement of 1647 was a result of a complex of outside factors, on the other hand it was also an original experience which changed the direction of the English Revolution.

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